

GO WITH THE FLOW (OR HOW TO FIX A CAR WITHOUT REALLY TRYING!)

Recently a 2000 Oldsmobile Silhouette rolled into the shop with a service engine soon light. A check of the PCM turned up a P0442 code (small evap system leak). Many shops seem to think that if they check the gas cap and its tight the code was either set in error or the cap was tightened after the code set at the following fuel fill up. There is a third choice. The car is still broken as in a small leak. Guess what? This one was.

It was time to go with the flow. By that I mean, time to test the evaporative emission system for leaks. The Genisys and the 6525 EVAP Systems tester (both from OTC) make it easy. Here's how. Using the Genisys I went into the special functions menu and sealed the evaporative emissions system by closing the vent valve by virtue of its bi-directional control capability. After a quick calibration and set up of the 6525 EVAP smoke machine I began to test the system for leaks by flowing nitrogen. (You are using nitrogen to check the systems aren't you? GM states it as part of the service procedure. Keep that in mind!) By code definition we are looking for a leak smaller than .020". That why the ability to flow nitrogen and gauge loss against a flow meter was so important. I wheeled the machine around to where I could easily see the front of it and went to work. Of course this is auto repair so it's no wonder that even with the best of equipment the system passed. No leaks. Next step was to flow smoke and do a visual for leaks. Once again, it passed. The pressure inside of me was starting to build, sort of like the evap system.

What would happen if I gently manipulated the components and connections of the evaporative emissions system while watching the flow meter I wondered? Since it responded to leaks much quicker than smoke it stood to reason that a small intermittent leak was sure to stand out. (This makes having the machine mobile on wheels a sweet deal!) Working my way around the vehicle with the cart in tow while flowing nitrogen and doing the "wiggle test" I found a poor seal at the fuel filler neck rubber hose. Repairing the connection took minutes, the hose clamp was rusted, and another car was out the door. Talk about going with the flow. **Bottom line;** if your evap system leak tester doesn't have a flow meter then how are you fixing cars? Standing around waiting for the smoke? Ouch!

Till the next time I'm Ron Ananian, The Car Doctor and I'm reminding you

"Good mechanics aren't expensive, they're priceless!"

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As heard on the WOR Radio Network
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