

from the
Field:



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Plugged Cap Tubes

COMMENT:

By Greg Snyder
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There were several comments dealing with plugged cap tubes in the Feb. 11, 2002 Hotline. I would also like to offer some thoughts.

Something that was overlooked in the answer regarding R-134a and R-404A is the idea of stopping the sludge before it hits the inlet of the capillary tube.

Early in the introduction of small, self-contained units using R-22, our company's techs noticed an increase in the number of units with restricted cap tubes to the point we would not replace a compressor without replacing the cap tube also. When units with R-134a were introduced and the problem of restricted capillaries hit epidemic proportions, we began using Sporlan C-052S driers . . . Sporlan now offers a solid-core drier with an access fitting made specifically for capillary tube applications. We have used those with excellent results.

I believe the problem starts with poor soldering and housekeeping habits . . . and is aggravated by the fact that the molecular screens in the spun driers . . . do not trap the sludge. The fate is sealed by the severe operating conditions in most restaurants. The fact that health departments today want the units sealed to the wall also elevates condensing temperatures to the point that everything inside the compressor breaks down, inducing heat-related failures.

In summary, to prevent plugged cap tubes:

- Use a solid-core drier.
- Keep the heat as low as possible when soldering components in the system.
- Ensure good airflow by ventilating cabinets, keeping fan shrouds in place, and installing baffles to prevent recirculation of discharge air.

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