Automatic HVAC Description and Operation

HVAC Control Components

HVAC Control

The HVAC control contains all switches, which are required to control the functions of HVAC and serve as interface between the operator and the HVAC control module. The selected values are passed to the HVAC control module via serial data.

HVAC Remote Control Module

The HVAC control module is a serial data device that interfaces between the operator and the HVAC system to maintain and control desired air temperature and air distribution settings. The battery positive voltage circuit provides power that the HVAC control module uses for keep alive memory. If the battery positive voltage circuit loses power, all HVAC DTCs and settings will be erased from keep alive memory. The body control module (BCM), which is the vehicle power mode master, provides a device ON-Signal. The HVAC control module provides blower, air delivery mode and air temperature settings.

The HVAC control module supports the following features:

Feature	Availability
Purge	Yes
Personalization	Yes
Actuator Calibration	Yes

HVAC Coolant Pump

The HVAC control module will control a cabin coolant heater pump based on a valid flow rate. If the HVAC Heating system requests a coolant flow rate, the HVAC coolant pump will be commanded "on" and to the desired speed.

HVAC Cabin Coolant Sensor

The HVAC control module will monitor a coolant temperature sensor input. This will be used to determine the heat source requirements for the coolant heater control module. This input will also be used along with engine temperature and other vehicle inputs.

Mode Actuator

The mode actuator is a 5-pin stepper motor. The HVAC control module supplies a 12 V reference voltage to the stepper motor and energizes the 4 stepper motor coils with a pulsed ground signal. The stepper motor puts the mode flap into the calculated position in order to reach the selected position. The null point of the stepper motor will be calibrated, if the stepper motor is new. When the stepper motor is calibrated, the HVAC control module can drive the applicable coil to reach exactly the desired position of the flap.

Air Temperature Actuator

The air temperature actuator is a 5-pin stepper motor. The HVAC control module supplies a 12 V reference voltage to the stepper motor and energizes the 4 stepper motor coils with a pulsed ground signal. The stepper motor puts the mixed air flap into the calculated position, in order to reach the selected temperature. The null point of the stepper motor will be calibrated, if the stepper motor is new. When the stepper motor is calibrated, the HVAC control module can drive the applicable coil to reach exactly the desired position of the flap.

Recirculation Actuator

The recirculation actuator is a 5-pin stepper motor. The HVAC control module supplies a 12 V reference voltage to the stepper motor and energizes the 4 stepper motor coils with a pulsed ground signal. The stepper motor puts the recirculation flap into the calculated position in order to reach the desired position. The null point of the stepper motor will be calibrated, if the stepper motor is new. When the stepper motor is calibrated, the HVAC control module can drive the applicable coil to reach exactly the desired position of the flap.

Blower Motor Control Module

The blower motor control module controls the speed of the blower motor by increasing or decreasing the voltage drop on the ground side of the blower motor. The HVAC control module provides a low side pulse width modulation (PWM) signal to the blower motor control module via the blower motor speed control circuit. As the requested blower speed increases, the HVAC control module increases the amount of time that the speed signal is modulated to ground. As the requested blower speed decreases, the HVAC control module decreases the amount of time that the signal is modulated to ground.

Duct Temperature Sensors

The air temperature sensors are 2-wire negative temperature co-efficient thermistors. The sensors operate within a temperature range of -40 to +85°C (-40 to +185°F). The sensors are installed in the air distribution ducts and measure the temperature of the air that streams from the ducts. The HVAC control module uses these values to calculate the mixed air flap position.

Evaporator Temperature Sensor

The evaporator temperature sensor is a 2-wire negative temperature co-efficient thermistor. The sensor operates within a temperature range of -40 to +85°C (-40 to +185°F). The sensor is installed at the evaporator and measures its temperature. If the temperature drops close to 3°C (38°F), the A/C compressor will be commanded off by the HVAC control module in order to prevent icing of the evaporator.

A/C Refrigerant Temperature Sensor

The A/C refrigerant temperature sensor is a 2-wire negative temperature co-efficient thermistor. The sensor operates within a temperature range of -40 to +85°C (-40 to +185°F). The sensor is installed in the low side refrigerant line and measures its temperature. If the temperature drops close to 3°C (38°F), the A/C compressor will be commanded off by the Hybrid/EV powertrain control module 2 in order to prevent icing of the evaporator.

Windshield Temperature and Inside Moisture Sensor

The windshield temperature and inside moisture sensor includes the relative humidity sensor, windshield temperature sensor and humidity sensing element temperature sensor.

This sensor assembly provides information about:

- Relative humidity level at windshield (compartment side)
- Temperature of the windshield inside (compartment side)
- Temperature of the humidity sensor element

The relative humidity sensor measures the relative humidity of the compartment side of the windshield. It also detects the temperature of the windshield surface on the passenger compartment side. Both values are used as control inputs for the HVAC control module application to calculate the fog risk on windshield compartment side and ability to reduce fuel consumption by decreasing A/C compressor power to a minimum without causing any fog. The sensor will also enable partial recirculation mode in order to improve heat-up performance of the passenger compartment under cold ambient temperature conditions without the risk of mist build-up on the windshield. The humidity sensor element temperature sensor supplies the temperature of the humidity sensor element.

Ambient Light/Sunload Sensor

The ambient light/sunload sensor includes the sunload sensor and passenger compartment temperature sensor.

This sensor assembly provides information about:

- Sun heat intensity
- Passenger compartment temperature

The solar sensor is connected to ground and to a 5 V stabilized voltage supply through the HVAC control module. As the sunload increases, the sensor signal voltage also increases and vice versa. The signal varies between 1.4–4.5 V and is provided to the HVAC control module.

The passenger compartment temperature sensor is a negative temperature co-efficient thermistor. A signal and low reference circuit enables the sensor to operate. As the air temperature increases, the sensor resistance decreases. The sensor signal varies between 0–5 V.

Bright or high intensity light causes the vehicles interior temperature to increase. The HVAC system compensates for the increased temperature by diverting additional cool air into the vehicle.

A/C Compressor

The AC compressor function is to provide refrigerant flow in the AC refrigerant loop to help cool down the cabin, help dehumidify the air in a defrost mode and help maintain the battery temperature. Rather than a more-typical pulley, the A/C compressor uses a 3-phase alternating current, high voltage electric motor to operate. It has an on-board inverter that takes high voltage direct current from the vehicle's high voltage battery and inverts it to alternating current for the motor. The AC compressor shall be activated when any of the three following events occur:

- The customer pushes the AC button or
- The HVAC control, in ECO climate or Comfort Climate Settings, requests the electric AC compressor on to help in cooling the cabin or removing moisture in conditions where the windows may fog or
- The hybrid/EV powertrain control module 2 requests the AC compressor on to help maintain the battery temperature

The hybrid/EV powertrain control module 2 uses values from the A/C refrigerant pressure sensor, A/C refrigerant thermistor, duct temperature sensors, ambient air temperature sensor , passenger compartment temperature sensor, evaporator temperature sensor, battery cell temperature sensors, battery coolant temperature sensors and battery coolant pumps to determine the speed at which the compressor will operate. This message is sent from the hybrid/EV powertrain control module 2 to the A/C compressor control module via serial data message.

Air Speed

The blower control switch is part of the HVAC faceplate control. The selected value of the blower switch position is sent to the HVAC control module via serial data.

The blower motor control module is an interface between HVAC control module and blower motor. The blower motor control module regulates supply voltage and ground circuits to blower motor. The HVAC control module provides a PWM signal to the blower motor control module in order to command the desired blower motor speed. The blower motor control module supplies battery voltage to the blower motor and uses the blower motor ground as a low side control to adjust the blower motor speed. The voltage amounts between 2–13 V and changes linear to the height of the PWM signal.

Afterblow

Afterblow is a feature that dries the evaporator core by operating the blower motor after the engine is turned OFF. This reduces the amount of microbial growth that can create undesirable odors. The vehicle does not come equipped with the afterblow feature turned ON. If the afterblow feature is required due to an odor concern, it must be enabled using the scan tool Afterblow configuration function.

After the HVAC control module has been programmed for afterblow, the following conditions must be met for afterblow to operate:

- The engine has been turned OFF for at least 30 minutes.
- The ambient air temperature is at least 21°C (70°F).
- The A/C compressor operated for more than 2 minutes before shut down.
- The system voltage is at least 12 volts.

Once the above conditions have been met, the following sequence of events will occur:

1. The blower motor will RUN for 20 seconds.
2. The blower motor will be OFF for 10 minutes.
3. The blower motor will RUN for and additional 20 seconds.

Air Delivery

The HVAC control module controls the distribution of air within the passenger compartment by the use of the mode actuator. The modes that may be selected are:

- Defrost
- Defog
- Panel
- Floor
- BiLevel

In auto mode, the air delivery mode is controlled automatically based on cooling/warming needs of the compartment. The desired air distribution mode can be selected with the air distribution buttons at the HVAC faceplate control. The HVAC control delivers the values to the HVAC control module via serial data. The HVAC control module controls the mode actuator so that it drives the flap to the calculated position. Depending on the position of the flap, air is distributed through various ducts leading to the outlets in the dash. Turning the mode flap to the defrost position, the HVAC control module will move the recirculation actuator to outside air, reducing window fogging. When defrost is selected, the blower motor will be activated. The HVAC control module enables a high volume of air delivered to the front defrost vents. A/C is available in all modes.

But what if it's raining humid outside too? You're better off recirculating

The rear window defogger does not affect the HVAC system.

Heating and A/C Operation

The purpose of the heating and A/C system is to provide heated and cooled air to the interior of the vehicle. The A/C system will also remove humidity from the interior and reduce windshield

fogging. Regardless of the temperature setting, the following can affect the rate that the HVAC system can achieve the desired temperature:

- Ambient air temperature
- Difference between inside and desired temperature
- Blower motor speed setting
- Mode setting
- Air conditioning control module operation
- Hybrid/EV powertrain control module 2 operation
- Coolant heater control module

Pressing the climate mode buttons (Comfort Mode or ECO Mode) enables the HVAC control module to determine whether to request A/C compressor and coolant heater activation. Based on the thermal conditions of the vehicle the HVAC control module sends a serial data message to the hybrid/EV powertrain control module 2 for the A/C request. The hybrid/EV powertrain control module 2 will request the A/C compressor control Module to engage A/C. The HVAC control module sends the heating request to the coolant heater control module to produce heat.

Climate Mode button (Fan Only) will disable all heating and cooling of the vehicle unless overridden by dehumidification requirements.

Recirculation Operation

The recirculation button is part of the HVAC faceplate control. The selected recirculation button position is sent to the HVAC control module via serial data. The HVAC control module controls the air intake through the recirculation actuator. The recirculation switch closes and opens the recirculation flap in order to circulate the air within the vehicle, or route outside air into the vehicle.

Inside air recirculation is ~~prevented~~ allowed if the defrost mode is not active. When the defrost mode is active, the recirculation actuator opens the recirculation flap and outside air is circulated to the windshield to reduce fogging.

In automatic recirculation mode the values of the windshield temperature and inside moisture sensor are used as control inputs for the HVAC control module application to calculate the fog risk on the passenger compartment side of the windshield. The A/C compressor and the defrost mode are activated to prevent or remove fog on the passenger compartment side of the windshield.

Automatic Operation

The user can select to operate the Blower, Recirculation and Air Delivery operations in auto per auto operation mode.

To put the HVAC system in full automatic mode, the following is required:

1. The auto button must be pressed.
2. The system indicates that all 3 functions are being operated automatically by lighting the auto button LED.

When the auto button is pressed, the system responds by putting the blower, air delivery and recirculation into auto mode. If any of these functions are adjusted then the auto button indication shall go off and the function will leave auto operation and follow the user requested setting: auto, blower, air delivery and recirculation. In this setting the blower request is adjusted to quickly heat the cabin initially. After comfort is reached, the blower is minimized to reduce noise and temperature drifts.

Under cold ambient temperatures, the automatic HVAC system provides heat in the most efficient manner. The operator can select an extreme temperature setting but the system will not warm

the vehicle any faster. Under warm ambient temperatures, the automatic HVAC system also provides air conditioning in the most efficient manner. Selecting an extreme cool temperature will not cool the vehicle any faster.

In automatic mode the values of the windshield temperature and inside moisture sensor are used as control inputs for the HVAC control module application to calculate the fog risk on the passenger compartment side of the windshield and ability to reduce fuel consumption by decreasing A/C compressor power to a minimum without causing any fog. The A/C compressor and the defrost mode may be activated to prevent or remove fog on the passenger compartment side of the windshield. The sensor will also enable partial recirculation mode in order to improve heat-up performance of the passenger compartment under cold ambient temperature conditions without the risk of mist build-up on the windshield.

Coolant Heater Control Module

The coolant heater control module is an essential element of the hybrid heating system. The hybrid/EV powertrain control module 2 controls the passenger compartment heater coolant control valve , and the HVAC commands the coolant heater control module activation. Heated coolant either from the engine or the coolant heater control module will meet HVAC temperature demands. The coolant heater control module will be commanded "off" if the coolant temperature exceeds the desired temperature.

Coolant heat generated by the engine is also an element of the heating system. Once the engine coolant is warm enough to supply the required heat, the passenger compartment heater coolant control valve will move to the 'link' position, which allows sharing of coolant between the engine, the coolant heater control module and passenger compartment heater core. The coolant heater control module power level will be reduced and/or cycled on/off as the engine turns on/off during charge-sustaining mode, maintaining cabin comfort. When the engine is utilized for charge sustaining mode the thermostat will control the normal engine operating coolant temperature. The thermostat also creates a restriction for the cooling system that promotes a positive coolant flow and helps prevent cavitation.

Heater coolant enters the heater core through the inlet heater hose, in a pressurized state. The heater core is located inside the HVAC module. The ambient air drawn through the HVAC module, absorbs the heat of the coolant flowing through the heater core. Heated air is distributed to the passenger compartment, through the HVAC module, for passenger comfort. Opening or closing the air temperature flap controls the amount of heat delivered to the passenger compartment. The coolant exits the heater core through the return heater hose and recirculates back to the system as controlled by the coolant passenger compartment heater coolant control valve.

A/C Compressor Cycle

Refrigerant is the key element in an air conditioning system. The refrigerant R-1234yf is utilized in this vehicle. R-1234yf is a very low temperature gas that can transfer the undesirable heat and moisture from the passenger compartment to the outside air.

The compressor builds pressure on the vapor refrigerant. Compressing the refrigerant also adds heat to the refrigerant. The refrigerant is discharged from the compressor, through the discharge hose, and forced to flow to the condenser and then through the balance of the A/C system.

Compressed refrigerant enters the condenser in a high temperature, high pressure vapor state. As the refrigerant flows through the condenser, the heat of the refrigerant is transferred to the ambient air passing through the condenser. Cooling the refrigerant causes the refrigerant to condense and change from a vapor to a liquid state.

The condenser is located in front of the radiator for maximum heat transfer. The condenser is made of aluminum tubing and aluminum cooling fins, which allows rapid heat transfer for the refrigerant. The semi-cooled liquid refrigerant exits the condenser and flows to the Receiver/Dehydrator(R/D).

The R/D contains desiccant that absorbs moisture that may be in the refrigerant system. The R/D also acts as a storage vessel to ensure that a steady flow of liquid reaches the Thermal Expansion Valve (TXV). The refrigerant exits the R/D and flows through the liquid line to the TXV.

The TXV is located at the front of dash and attaches to the evaporator inlet and outlet pipes. The TXV is the dividing point for the high and the low pressure sides of the A/C system. As the refrigerant passes through the TXV, the pressure on the refrigerant is lowered. The TXV also meters the amount of liquid refrigerant that can flow into the evaporator.

Refrigerant exiting the TXV flows into the evaporator core in a low pressure, liquid state. The HVAC control module blows air through the evaporator core. Warm and moist air will cause the liquid refrigerant to boil inside of the evaporator core. The boiling refrigerant absorbs heat from the ambient air and draws moisture onto the evaporator. The refrigerant exits the evaporator through the suction line and back to the A/C compressor, in a vapor state, and completing the A/C cycle of heat removal. At the A/C compressor, the refrigerant is compressed again and the cycle of heat removal is repeated.

The conditioned air is distributed through the HVAC control module for passenger comfort. The heat and moisture removed from the passenger compartment will also change form, or condense, and is discharged from the HVAC control module as water through a drain to outside(underside) of the vehicle.

The A/C system is mechanically protected with the use of a high pressure relief valve. If the A/C refrigerant pressure sensor fails or if the refrigerant system becomes restricted and refrigerant pressure continued to rise, the high pressure relief will pop open and release refrigerant from the system.