

ORIFICE TUBES

The orifice tube, probably the most commonly used, can be found in most GM and Ford models. It is located in the inlet tube of the evaporator, or in the liquid line, somewhere between the outlet of the condenser and the inlet of the evaporator.

This point can be found in a properly functioning system by locating the area between the outlet of the condenser and the inlet of the evaporator that suddenly makes the change from hot to cold. You should then see small dimples placed in the line that keep the orifice tube from moving.

Most of the orifice tubes in use today measure approximately three inches in length and consist of a small brass tube, surrounded by plastic, and covered with a filter screen at each end. It is not uncommon for these tubes to become clogged with small debris.

While inexpensive, usually between three to five dollars, the labor to replace one involves recovering the refrigerant, opening the system up, replacing the orifice tube, evacuating and then recharging.

With this in mind, it might make sense to install a larger pre filter in front of the orifice tube to minimize the risk of of this problem reoccurring. Some Ford models have a permanently affixed orifice tube in the liquid line. These can be cut out and replaced with a combination filter/orifice assembly.