

If Your Engine Won't Start

Diagnosing why your engine won't start falls into two areas, depending on what you hear when you turn the key to START (III):

- You hear nothing, or almost nothing. The engine's starter motor does not operate at all, or operates very slowly.
- You can hear the starter motor operating normally, but the engine does not start up and run.

Nothing Happens or the Starter Motor Operates Very Slowly

When you turn the ignition switch to START (III), you do not hear the normal noise of the engine trying to start. You may hear a clicking sound or series of clicks, or nothing at all.

Check these things:

- Check the transmission interlock. If you have a 5-speed, the clutch pedal must be pushed all the way to the floor or the starter will not operate. With an automatic transmission, it must be in Park or Neutral.
- Turn the ignition switch to ON (II). Turn on the headlights and check their brightness. If the headlights are very dim or don't light at all, the battery is discharged. See **Jump Starting** on page [161](#).

- Turn the ignition switch to START (III). If the headlights do not dim, check the condition of the fuses. If the fuses are OK, there is probably something wrong with the electrical circuit for the ignition switch or starter motor. You will need a qualified technician to determine the problem. (See **Towing** on page [172](#).)

If the headlights dim noticeably or go out when you try to start the engine, either the battery is discharged or the connections are corroded. Check the condition of the battery and terminal connections (see page [126](#)). You can then try jump starting the car from a booster battery (see page [161](#)).

If Your Engine Won't Start, Jump Starting

The Starter Operates Normally

In this case, the starter motor sounds normal when you turn the ignition switch to START (III), but the engine does not run.

- Are you using the proper starting procedure? Refer to **Starting the Engine** on page [89](#).
- Do you have gas? Turn the ignition switch to ON (II) for a minute and watch the fuel gauge.
- There may be an electrical problem, such as no power to the fuel pump. Check all the fuses (see page [169](#)).

If you find nothing wrong, you will need a qualified technician to find the problem. See **Towing** on page [172](#).

Jump Starting

If your car's battery has run down, you may be able to start the engine by using a booster battery. Although this seems like a simple procedure, there are several precautions you should take. Follow the directions closely.

WARNING

A battery can explode if you do not follow the correct procedure, seriously injuring anyone nearby.

Keep all sparks, open flames, and smoking materials away from the battery.

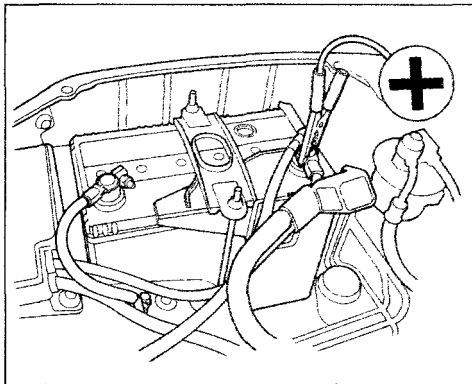
You cannot start a Honda with an automatic transmission by pushing or pulling it.

To jump start your car:

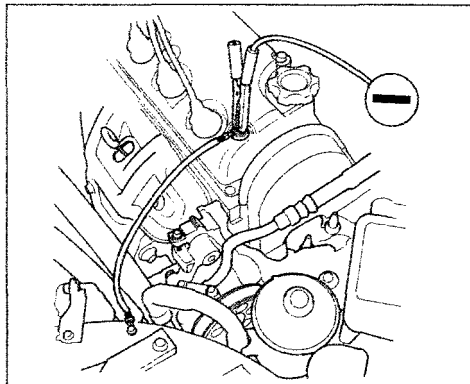
1. Open the hood and check the physical condition of the battery (see page [126](#)). In very cold weather, check the condition of the electrolyte. If it seems slushy or like ice, do not try jump starting until it thaws.
- ### **NOTICE**
- If a battery sits in extreme cold, the electrolyte inside can freeze. Attempting to jump start with a frozen battery can cause it to rupture or explode.
2. Turn off all the electrical accessories: heater, A/C, stereo system, lights, etc. Put the transmission in Neutral or Park and set the parking brake.

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Jump Starting

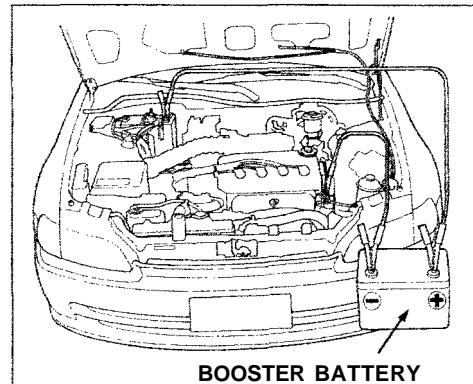


3. Connect one jumper cable to the positive (+) terminal on the booster battery. Connect the other end to the positive (+) terminal on your Honda's battery.



4. Connect the second jumper cable to the negative (-) terminal on the booster battery. Connect the other end to the grounding strap as shown. Do not connect this jumper cable to any other part of the engine.

5. If the booster battery is in another car, have an assistant start that car and run it at a fast idle.



6. Start your car. If the starter motor still operates slowly, check the jumper cable connections to make sure they have good metal-to-metal contact.

7. Once your car is running, disconnect the negative cable from your car, then from the booster battery. Disconnect the positive cable from your car, then the booster battery.

If Your Engine Overheats

The pointer of your car's temperature gauge should stay in the mid-range under most conditions. It may go higher if you are driving up a long steep hill on a very hot day. If it climbs to the red mark, you should determine the reason.

NOTICE

Driving with the temperature gauge pointer at the red mark can cause serious damage to your engine.

Your car can overheat for several reasons, such as lack of coolant or a mechanical problem. The only indication may be the temperature gauge climbing to or above the red mark. Or you may see steam or spray coming from under the hood. In either case, you should take immediate action.

WARNING

Steam and spray from an overheated engine can seriously scald you.

Do not open the hood if steam is coming out.

1. Safely pull to the side of the road. Put the transmission in neutral or Park and set the parking brake. Turn off the climate control and all other accessories. Turn on the hazard warning indicators.
2. If you see steam and/or spray coming from under the hood, turn off the engine.
3. If you do not see steam or spray, leave the engine running and watch the temperature gauge. If the high heat is due to overloading (climbing a long, steep hill on a hot day with the A/C running, for example), the engine should start to cool down almost immediately. If it does, wait until the temperature gauge comes down to the midpoint then continue driving.

CONTINUED

If Your Engine Overheats

4. If the temperature gauge stays at the red mark, turn off the engine.
5. Wait until you see no more signs of steam or spray, then open the hood.
6. Look for any obvious coolant leaks, such as a split radiator hose. Everything is still extremely hot, so use caution. If you find a leak, it must be repaired before you continue driving (see Towing on page 172).
7. If you don't find an obvious leak, check the coolant level in the radiator reserve tank (see page 113). If the level is below the MIN mark, add coolant to half-way between the MIN and MAX marks.
8. If there was no coolant in the reserve tank, you may also have to add coolant to the radiator.

Let the engine cool down until the pointer reaches the middle of the temperature gauge, or lower, before checking the radiator.

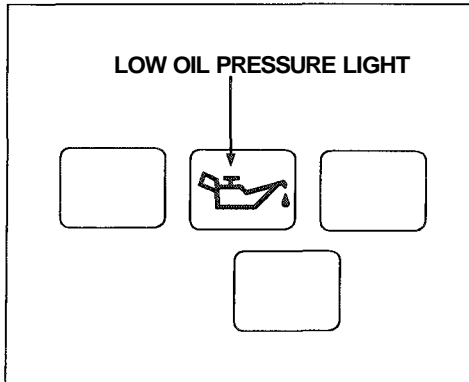
WARNING

Removing the radiator cap while the engine is hot can cause the coolant to spray out, seriously scalding you.

Always let the engine and radiator cool down before removing the radiator cap.

9. Using gloves or a large heavy cloth, turn the radiator cap counterclockwise, without pushing down, to the first stop. This releases any remaining pressure in the cooling system. After the pressure releases, push down on the cap and turn it until it comes off.

10. Start the engine and set the heater control lever to maximum. Add coolant to the radiator up to the base of the filler neck. If you do not have the proper coolant mixture available, you can add plain water. Remember to have the cooling system drained and refilled with the proper mixture as soon as you can.
11. Put the radiator cap back on tightly. Run the engine and watch the temperature gauge. If it goes back to the red mark, the engine needs repair. (See Towing on page 172.)
12. If the temperature stays normal, check the coolant level in the radiator reserve tank. If it has gone down, add coolant to the MAX mark. Put the cap back on tightly.



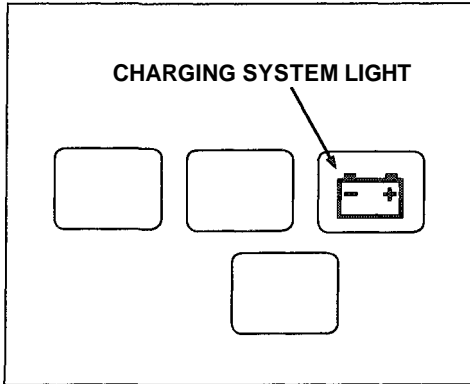
The low oil pressure light should never come on when the engine is running. If this light comes on with the engine running, take immediate action.

NOTICE

Running the engine with low oil pressure can cause serious mechanical damage almost immediately. Turn off the engine as soon as you can safely get the car stopped.

1. Safely pull off the road and shut off the engine.
2. Let the car sit for a minute. Open the hood and check the oil level (see page 109). Although oil level and oil pressure are not directly connected, an engine that is very low on oil can lose pressure during cornering and other driving maneuvers.
3. If necessary, add oil to bring the level back to the full mark on the dipstick (see page 109).
4. Start the engine and watch the oil pressure light. If the light does not go out within ten seconds, turn off the engine. There is a mechanical problem that needs to be repaired before you can continue driving. (See **Towing** on page 172.)

Charging System Indication



The charging system light should go out after the engine starts. If it comes on brightly with the engine running, the alternator is no longer charging the battery.

Immediately turn off all electrical accessories: radio, heater, A/C, rear defogger, cruise control, etc. Try not to use other electrically-operated controls such as the power windows. Keep the engine running and take extra care not to stall it. Starting the engine will discharge the battery rapidly.

By eliminating as much of the electrical load as possible, you can drive several miles before the battery is too discharged to keep the engine running. Drive to a service station or garage where you can get technical assistance.