

# Car Radiator Replacement Solutions

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*Article by: Matthew Keegan*

My first attempt at a more difficult auto fix-it project involved replacing the blown radiator on my '78 VW Rabbit Diesel. Let's just say that I was a little "green" in this area and it was only with the help of a good friend that I was able to complete the task without resorting to calling a garage to finish the job. Still, it was a good experience for me and I believe that it is one job I could successfully tackle again in the future. You can too provided you purchase reliable OEM parts and get instructions that are easy to follow.

Back during the time that I owned my VW, the number of parts stores carrying in stock Volkswagen parts was fairly limited; the internet was in its infancy so shopping around for the best deal wasn't something that I could do. The local VW dealer had the part, but their prices were stratospheric. I simply did not have the funds available to buy one from the dealer so I ended up snagging a radiator off of a junked Rabbit. Big mistake! It turned out that the junked car's radiator leaked and the cap did not quite fit. I never found out why it was that way, but the junkyard dealer did refund my money. Fortunately, a local garage ended up having a decent used one available; we installed that one without too much of a problem.

Of course, I worried about the replacement part as it wasn't warranted and it looked, well, *quite used*. Sure it was no **BMW radiator** so I did not have to pay a mint to have it shipped in from Germany nor was it a pricey **Honda radiator** fresh off the boat from Japan. Certainly, I counted myself blessed. Still, I found myself frantically watching the temperature gauge particularly on hot days when I ran the a/c at full blast. I was sure the "new" radiator would give out once again, so I pampered the car as much as I could.

Fortunately the options today for the consumer are better than ever before. Your choices include:

1. Ordering your part from a dealer as long as you are willing to pay full freight and then some.
2. Visit an auto parts store and see if they have the part on hand – this can work if it is a **Jeep radiator**, but you can expect that your Isuzu radiator will involve a 2-3 week back order.
3. Go to the junkyard and hope that your part can be found and is in excellent condition. Yeah, right.
4. Finally, you can order online through an established and reputable dealer who does not have the overhead of maintaining expensive brick and mortar stores. Prices with select online dealers are competitive and usually involve same day shipping at no extra cost to you.

As for the Rabbit, I traded it in for a new car only months after replacing the radiator. Had my replacement part purchasing options been better, I would have held onto it a bit longer. Shoot, at 50 miles per gallon the 'lil bunny would be a jewel to have on hand today! Matt Keegan is a contributing writer for Car Parts Stuff, an online supplier of high quality and well priced automobile parts.