

# Cleaning AC Condensate Drains

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*1976 XJ-S*

*September 12, 2005*

## **Background**

If you sometimes experience water splashing on your feet while making right turns it is probably because the tubes that are supposed to drain the condensate from the evaporator are clogged. They tend to clog due to disintegration of the thin foam used as flap seals in the AC unit behind the dash, or simply dirt from years of dust washing off the evaporator. When I cleaned mine for the first time recently it seemed to be the latter, as there was lots of fine material rather than chunks. Regardless of the source, the problem is easily solved.

## **Solution**

There is a drain tube on each side, dropping down from of the AC unit and emerging under the car. The red arrow in Figure 1 points to the emerging tube on the left side of the car, approximately at the front of the transmission pan. There is another one on the right side. All you have to do is run something up the tube to break loose whatever is clogging it.



**Figure 1 Condensate Drain**

Recently I had my car on the rack at Britalia (<http://homepage.mac.com/asouter/britalia/Menu25.html>) and they were kind enough to

let me clean the tubes while it was in the air. Although most people on the XJ-S Lovers mail list seem to use a coat hanger, they let me use their “special equipment” for the job, Figure 2. In the chuck of the hand drill is a length of spiral-wound cable. It seemed to be a little more substantial, but I imagine an old speedometer cable would do the job. Or, just straighten a coat hanger like most of the folks. Either way, a gentle touch is called for because the tubes are rubber. You might want to be sure there no sharp edges on whatever you use for the job.



**Figure 2 Special cleaning equipment**

If you don't like getting under the car the tubes can also be cleaned from above, according to some Jag Lovers. You have to take off the inboard footwell trim pieces to get at the top ends of the drain tubes. I have never done it this way so I don't know how difficult it is to disconnect the tubes and get them back on without damaging them.

One other thing sometimes mentioned is that the drains may quickly clog again if the problem is disintegrating foam or other collected debris in the unit. It's a huge job to replace the foam as it would require removal of the dash, and perhaps the AC unit itself. Some people have reported removing the side plate and cleaning the drip tray of debris as best they could. I have not tried that.