



Car A/C Not Cold — What It Usually Is, and What It Costs

How real visits for weak or warm A/C ended at independent shops across the US — the part actually replaced, how often, and what it cost when it was the only fix.

A/C refrigerant

The single most common outcome — nearly half of these visits when combined with the runner-up

A/C refrigerant **\$107 – \$264**

A/C compressor **\$337 – \$988**

typical cost when it was the only fix
(parts + labor)

THE FIX INVOLVED	SHARE OF THESE VISITS*	TYPICAL COST†	MEDIAN
A/C refrigerant	72.4%	\$107 – \$264	\$162
A/C compressor	14.0%	\$337 – \$988	\$677
A/C condenser	8.6%	\$305 – \$727	\$491
Hose	6.2%	\$103 – \$387	\$207
Blower motor	5.7%	\$185 – \$435	\$287
A/C expansion valve	4.7%	\$170 – \$574	\$310
Clutch	4.6%	\$246 – \$1,016	\$597
Serpentine belt	3.9%	\$120 – \$292	\$182
Switch	2.9%	\$126 – \$344	\$216
Other, rarer causes	smaller shares — expansion valves, blend-door actuators, pressure switches, relays	varies	—

*Share of visits whose repair involved this part; combined repairs count toward each part, so shares overlap and don't add to 100%.

†Middle half of real invoices when this was the only fix — parts + labor, all vehicle types.

WHICH ONE IS YOURS? LISTEN FIRST

- **Gradually got weaker** — Slow decline over a season or two is the small-leak signature — recharge with dye, drive, and re-check is the standard playbook, and often several summers of relief.
- **Quit suddenly** — Cold-to-warm overnight points at a component: compressor clutch, a blown fuse or relay, or a rapid leak.
- **Blows cold, then warm in traffic** — Cooling that fades at idle and returns at speed is usually the condenser fan or an overcharged/failing system straining at low airflow — a different fix than a simple recharge.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE SHOP

Expect gauges on the system before anything is sold — low refrigerant means a leak, and a recharge without a leak test is a short-lived fix. A recharge with dye is the cheap start; a compressor or condenser the expensive answer. If the quote is a compressor, ask whether the system will be flushed and the drier replaced — skipping those kills the new unit.

ABOUT THIS DATA · HOW TO USE THIS BRIEF

Vehicles **all makes and models, US fleet**

Data confidence **High** — *large sample, stable shares*

Records through **July 2026**, refreshed continuously

Source **paid invoices from independent US repair shops**

Take it to the shop. It tells you what the likely answers are and what each one should cost — so when the diagnosis comes back, you already know whether the number fits. Vehicle-specific price reports for the common fixes are on fixdozer.com.