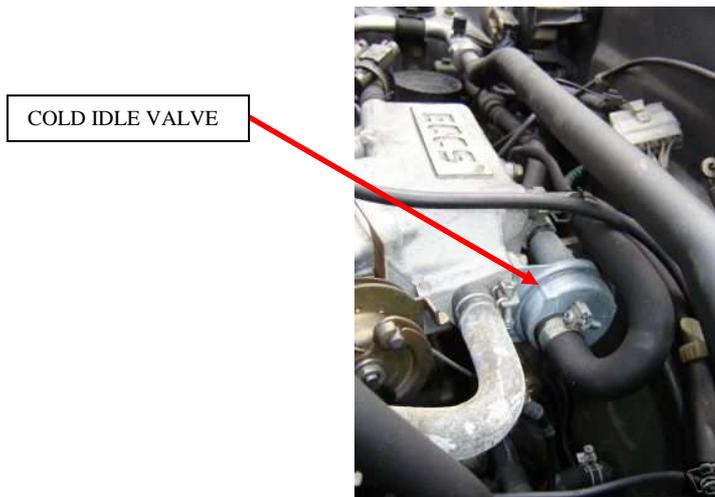


NISSAN FIGARO NIGGLES – PART 3

MY FIGARO WON'T IDLE PROPERLY WHEN COLD

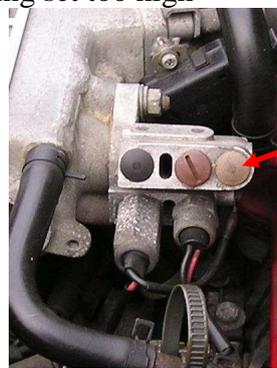
When you start a Figaro first thing in the morning, it should fast idle. The idle speed should then gradually drop to normal over a few minutes as the engine warms up. On a cold winter's morning – the idle speed may be as high as 1800RPM + initially. If the car doesn't fast idle and you need to coax it to prevent it stalling on a cold start – chances are that the cold idle valve has failed. It's becoming a very common problem on Figaros, but realistically – failure of such components is to be expected after 18 years!



The valve is easy to change – it's held on by two bolts. Don't use undue force on the bolts – they can snap easily and it's then a very time consuming job to remove the fractured bolt!

ENGINE SHAKES / STEERING WHEEL VIBRATES WHEN STATIONARY

You're standing in traffic and the engine isn't smooth and the steering column may vibrate. Often this is simply due to the idle speed being set too low. Increase the idle speed marginally and check if this improves matters. Do not increase idle speed excessively – on a level road, car in D and without touching the accelerator – the car should creep at no more than a slow walking pace. If the creep is excessive then it's usually due to the idle speed being set too high



IDLE SCREW
BENEATH DUST CAP

ENGINE SPEED DROPS WHEN SWITCHING ON LIGHTS ETC

You're standing in D and as you turn on the headlights or turn the steering wheel – the engine speed takes a dive and remains at a low idle speed. There is a system that should compensate for the additional engine load when equipment is operated. What should happen is that there should be a momentary dip in revs followed by a rapid recovery. Often a clean and adjustment of the compensation system is all that's needed to sort any problems. The compensation system only operates in D or R and not in P or N

There is a similar compensation system that operates when the aircon compressor switches on and off

THE IDLE SPEED GOES UP AND DOWN

The idle speed suddenly drops – remains low for a while– then recovers for a while before repeating the cycle. This oscillating behaviour has two main causes.

- The window switches can stick. This causes the window motor to try to turn when the window reaches the closed position. The excessive load on the motor causes the idle speed to drop. After a while, the motor overload operates so the idle speed recovers. The overload resets itself and the idle speed drops again. It's easy to check for this problem by opening the windows halfway – if the idle speed continues to oscillate – the window switch isn't the problem!
- Certain failures of the Lambda oxygen sensor can cause the idle speed to oscillate. This is by far the more common issue. Sometimes the problem can be observed not only at idle but also whilst driving at a steady speed with a steady accelerator position. A new Lambda sensor usually solves the problem!

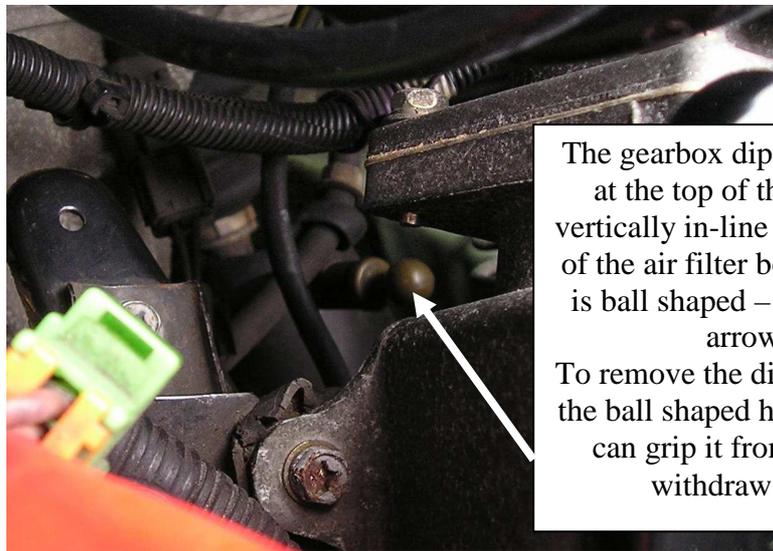
FAULTS WITH THE AUTOMATIC GEARBOX

Generally the automatic gearbox on the Figaro is very reliable. Problems encountered are:

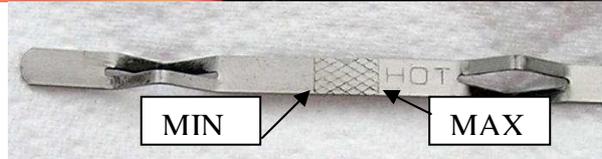
- D or R take a while to engage and the engine may need to be revved to get the car to move eventually
- The gearbox won't change gear, or upward gear changes only take place at abnormally high road speed
- The engine revs are abnormally high for a given road speed

A very significant number of gearbox problems stem from a low level of automatic transmission fluid (ATF) in the gearbox. Low ATF level will cause serious gearbox damage so it does need to be checked now and again. It's not the easiest of routine checks and it's an operation that's often omitted when Figaros are serviced! We've outlined the method below.

It may seem a strange comment but the ATF on the Figaro shouldn't be drained and refilled – draining the oil can cause gearbox problems!!



The gearbox dipstick is located at the top of the gearbox – vertically in-line with the corner of the air filter box. The handle is ball shaped – you can see it arrowed.
To remove the dipstick - pull up the ball shaped handle until you can grip it from above and withdraw it fully.



It is essential to check the level with the engine HOT, and the high and low hot levels are marked either side of the hatched area on the “HOT” side of the dipstick. Hot (50 – 80 deg C) means driving the car from cold for about 10 minutes at no more than 50MPH.

Park the car on level ground

With the engine running and the handbrake applied – move the selector stick through all gear positions ending up in P.

With the engine still running – remove the dipstick – **BEWARE OF ROTATING EQUIPMENT!!** Remember that the radiator fan / aircon condenser fan can start unexpectedly.

Clean the dipstick with lint free cloth and re-insert to measure the level.

Always wipe and re-insert the dip stick to check the level.

Whilst checking the level, ensure that the fluid is bright and clear. If it's dark or smells burnt – consult an auto-transmission specialist. Do not drain and refill the gearbox without consulting a specialist. Nissan advise not changing the fluid!

If topping up is required – use DEXRON 3 ATF (if Dexron 3 isn't available – use Dexron 2). Topping up is via the dipstick hole – unfortunately it isn't east to manoeuvre the ATF bottle into position. Pinch the plastic extension tube to prevent spillage whilst inserting the tube into the dipstick pipe. Add only small quantities at a time. Both high and low levels can cause gearbox problems. The capacity between the Max and Min marks is about 1 litre.