

Car air conditioners: comfort at a price

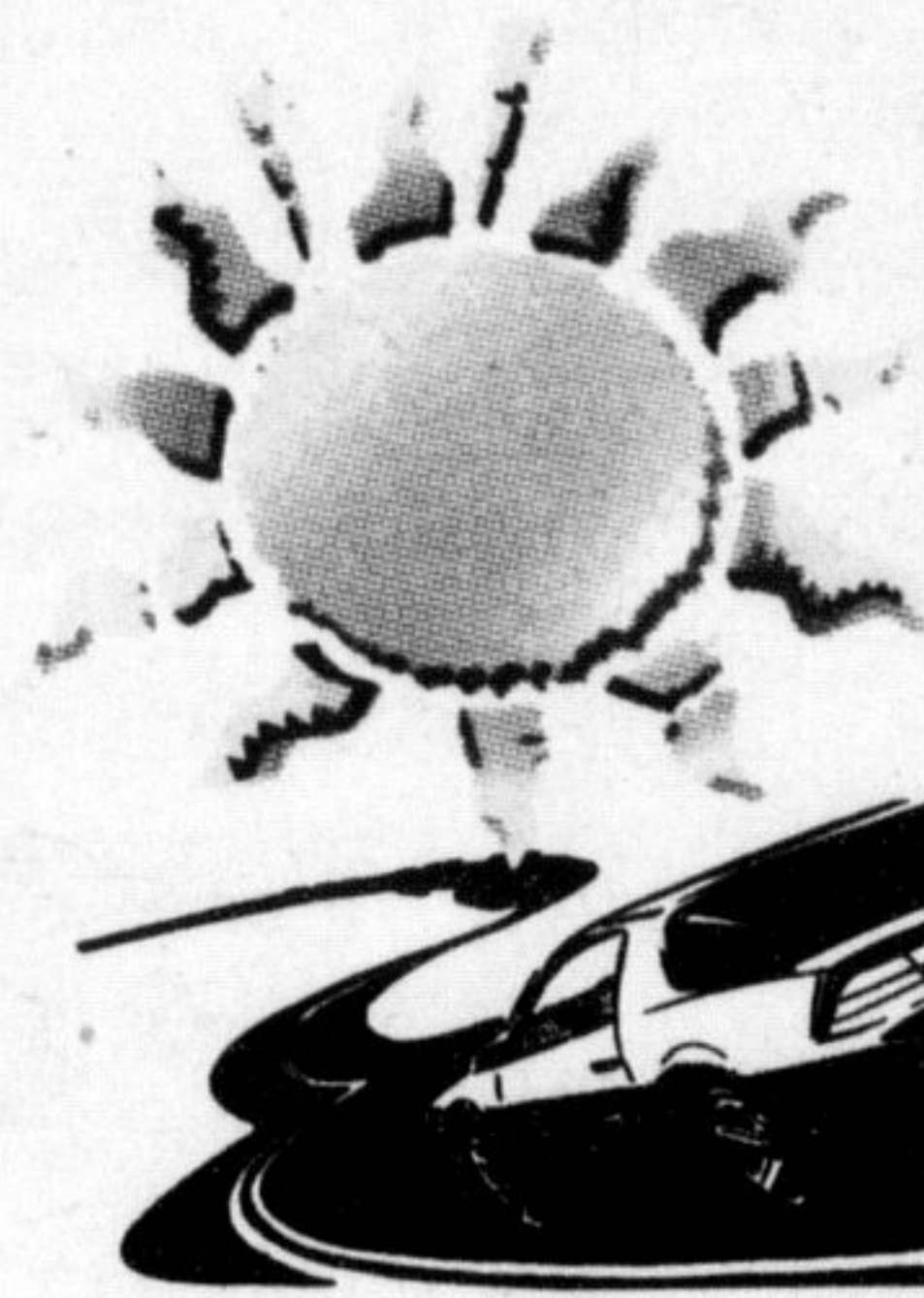
(NC)-In many parts of Canada, car air conditioners are considered almost a necessity in hot and humid summer weather. But the comfort of a cool automobile comes at a cost: increased fuel consumption and higher output of greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

That's because air conditioning places an extra load on the engine, which means it has to work harder to achieve the same result. Operating an air conditioner in hot weather can increase fuel consumption by more than 20 percent in city driving.

So what are your options? To stay cool at highway speeds, try using your car's flow-through ventilation. At low, city speeds, open windows or sunroofs can be a fuel-saving alternative to air conditioning, but on the highway they increase aerodynamic drag and fuel consumption.

Another possible solution is to install tinted

glass on your vehicle. Tinted glass prevents some of the sun's heat from entering the vehicle, which in turn can reduce the need for air conditioning and help you save fuel. Tinted glass can be installed on both new and used vehicles.



Your best solution, however, may simply be to use the air conditioner wisely-in other words, only when it's absolutely necessary. For maximum efficiency, keep the windows closed and switch the air conditioner on and off as needed.

More information on fuel-efficient driving is available on the AutoSmart Web site at <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/vehicles> or by calling 1 800 387-2000.

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