

Condition of spark plugs critical Car bodies deserve winterizing

"It hasn't been my day," complained the housewife. "This morning my car wouldn't start and I got an overdrawn notice on my checking account from the bank."

While the doubly unfortunate circumstances seemingly are unrelated, there is a striking parallel between cars not starting and checks bouncing. They are both cases of demand exceeding the supply.

The bank overdrafts are a matter of simple economics. An avalanche of bills falls due at once and there is a shortage of funds in the bank. You write one check too many, and you're overdrawn.

Reduces supply

In the case of the starting failures, it is a matter of inclement weather reducing the supply of electrical current available from the ignition system. At the same time, the plugs' need for high voltage is increased. When ignition components, particularly spark plugs, are worn, the result is starting bankruptcy.

When winter comes, the voltage available dwindles while the voltage required soars. For example, at 0° F., a battery loses about half of its cranking power. At the same time, cold weather increases the voltage required to fire the spark plugs and it's harder to vaporize fuel to form ignitable mixtures in the combustion chamber.

And when parts of the ignition system are not functioning properly, starting problems are virtually a certainty.

Condition critical

As spark plugs undergo normal use, the electrical and chemical punishment they receive erodes their gaps. The wider the gap, the more voltage is required to make the spark jump across to cause ignition.

Worn electrodes, therefore, increase the demand for voltage to achieve ignition. In addition, foreign deposits on the spark plugs, such as wet fuel, carbon, oil, or lead, can further hamper ignition.

Other ignition system components must be in good working condition for dependable starting. The spark plug wires and boots, the distributor and its components and the coil can help cause a can't start when they are malfunctioning due to wear or damage.

Best insurance

According to a recent survey, a tune-up is the best insurance against repeated starting problems. Recharging or replacing the battery alone does not always do the job. More than one out of every three motorists who serviced their batteries after a starting failure had repeated trouble. That is twice the rate of new starting problems experienced by owners who purchased tune-ups after the first failure.

Where winter starts are concerned, a complete tune-up is like money in the bank.



Self-service gasoline stations may save you pennies at the pumps, but services that used to be given by attendants may be neglected. In the foul-weather season, maximum visibility is vital. So follow this motorist's example by checking windshield washer fluid levels frequently. Also, make certain the wiper blades are in good condition and that all lights and signals are working.

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An untuned car is a gas goblin.

CHAMPION

If there is one area that has plagued the manufacturers more than any other part of the car, it is the body. The battle against rust is constant. Manufacturers are concentrating on this problem as never before. The final figures on the amount of salt used in the nation's snow belt last year probably will exceed 10 million tons. It nearly reached that figure in 1975. In 1960, only two million tons were scattered on urban

and country highways and the annual tonnage of about 10 years ago was only twice that figure.

Making the car producers' job even more difficult is that some communities are using calcium chloride. That chemical is more effective than rock salt as the mercury goes down but it's also much more destructive on metal.

For years, zinc coating has been a good rust inhibitor. It still is but the car-makers are using a lot more of it to counter the increased application of rock salt and other chemicals. Also, paint is applied in thicker coats and hard-to-reach interior

areas of the car are being sprayed with a wax that hardens and forms a protective film.

Meanwhile, the owner can do his part to prevent rust from getting a head start. Keep your car clean with frequent washing of all surfaces, especially the underside of the car.

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