

A Hidden Electrical Fault

By Tom Endy

Reproduction Model A Ford firewall terminal blocks have been made in Hong Kong for at least the last 30 years that I am aware of and each has a potential hidden electrical fault that can be very difficult to locate and it could be disastrous, and actually cause a fire. The word Hong Kong is stamped on them, so there is no question where they come from.

In the photo, the back side of the terminal block seen on the right attaches directly to the fire wall with four screws. The originals were constructed such that the two terminal studs were molded into the structure during the manufacturing process and there is no way they could short out to the fire wall. The reproductions were manufactured by drilling two holes through the molding and inserting two screws into them from the back that form the two studs that are retained by a nut on each at the front. The two screws can easily back out and touch the fire wall. Both studs (screws) always have battery power on them, so there would be a direct electrical short circuit that is totally obscured.

It is prudent to do some modification to the Hong Kong terminal blocks before installing them. First, apply a little lock tight to the threads of the two screws where they screw into the nut at front and securely tighten. Next fill the hole behind each screw head with JB Weld. This will prevent the screw from backing out and shorting to the fire wall. JB Weld is non-conductive. The terminal block seen at right in the photo has had this done to it.

