

## A Word about Safety

Over the past months this column has included ways to get more enjoyment out of your Model A Ford. We have discussed what can be done to increase performance and reliability and how to maintain your Model A. There has been articles dealing with brakes, cooling system, electrical system, transmissions, overdrives, tires and several other Model A related subjects but one very important subject that has not been addressed is FIRE. Good maintenance and repair practices will go a long way to prevent a fire. Hopefully, we will never have to deal with our Model A catching on fire but if it should, we need to be prepared.

Electrical fires are usually the result of a short in the electrical system where a bare wire comes into contact with a metal part of the body or chassis. Inspect the wiring in your Model A paying particular attention where the wires are held in place with metal clips or where a wire passes thru a hole in the firewall that is not properly insulated. Old wiring with bad insulation needs to be replaced and all non original wiring must be properly installed and protected. Look closely at the back of the instrument panel. The ammeter and ignition switch connections are very close to the metal gas tank and susceptible to grounding. Good quality reproduction wiring harnesses, available from the better Model A parts suppliers, are easy to install and will provide many years of safe reliable service.

Other causes of an electrical fire may be the result of the un-insulated "hot" battery post, starter cable connection or other connections of a wire or cable to an electrical component that is allowed to contact a grounded metal part of the car. The addition of a fuse block at the starter switch will help protect the electrical system from damage should a short occur. Installing a master shut off switch is also advised because it will isolate the battery when the car is not in use or when maintenance is being performed.

Most of the time, non electrical fires are caused by gasoline or oil coming into contact with a hot exhaust system. Periodically inspect the fuel system for leaks. Pay particular attention to any fuel hose you may be using as part of your fuel system. Older fuel hose will deteriorate more rapidly when used with our currently available gasoline that is formulated with ethanol. Do not drive your Model A with a fuel system leak. From the factory, all Model A's were equipped with an up draft carburetor where the fuel inlet to the carburetor is lower than the fuel tank. A slight leak in the float valve in the carburetor can result in fuel leaking onto the ground under the car so be sure to always shut off the fuel supply when your Model A is parked.

Use common sense when working on your Model A. Disconnect the battery when working on the electrical system. Use caution when gasoline is present and be especially careful if you are doing any welding or using any open flame when doing repairs.

Last of all, always carry a fire extinguisher in your Model A. Most of the time very little damage will be done if a fire can be immediately extinguished. Not having a fire extinguisher handy should a fire occur could result in the loss of your Model A.

## Tech Tip

MaxOut and HalGuard are two fire extinguishers that are specifically made for carrying in your car. MaxOut is a powder extinguisher that is inexpensive and will do a good job at putting out a fire. While the powder leaves a residue and will have to be cleaned up, it will not harm painted surfaces. HalGuard is an extinguisher that contains a liquid that, when released, will turn to a gas and smother the fire. HalGuard is more expensive but leaves no residue to clean up.

A One Lb. extinguisher is a good size to carry in your Model A. MaxOut and HalGuard one Lb. extinguishers are available with a mounting bracket and can be purchased from Amazon, Speedway, Summit Racing, Jeg's and other automotive parts stores.

