

Now What Do We Do?

Now that this Coronavirus situation has taken hold and we are all hunkering down for the duration, we need to find something to do instead of just sitting around reading the paper and watching the news. How about doing some real good, and probably long overdue, maintenance on your Model A?

Most of us know when the last time was that we changed the oil but what about the other fluids in the car? The transmission and rear end lube should also periodically be changed, certainly, not as often as the engine oil but it should be periodically be changed. Henry recommended the transmission and differential lubricant be changed every 5000 miles. With the quality of today's oils and how we use our cars, I recommend 10,000 miles or 5 years, whichever comes first. The oil itself does not wear out but instead, these components will accumulate moisture and contaminants which over time will cause the internal pieces to corrode and deteriorate. Periodically changing the lubricant will remove these contaminants. If you have an overdrive or a replacement transmission, follow the manufacturer's recommendations for service interval and the type of lubricant to be used. The oil that is correct for a stock Model A transmission is not what is needed for a modern transmission.

Do not forget the wheel bearings. Again, Henry recommended cleaning and repacking the wheel bearings every 5000 miles. I think this can be safely extended to 10,000 miles or 5 years for the same reason as the transmission and differential lubricant. This will also give you an opportunity to look at the condition of the brakes. Be sure to use the correct long fiber Drum Brake wheel bearing grease.

This is also a good time to do a complete and thorough lubrication of the chassis. There are a lot of lube points on the chassis so refer to the Instruction Book (Owner's Manual) or other published information to be sure you get everything properly lubricated. There are not only grease fittings but a lot of other items that need a little oil such as the brake clevis pins, generator, distributor, horn, accelerator linkage just to name a few, and do not forget the accelerator cross shaft behind the engine. Thru the years, there may have been additional grease fittings added to the chassis, usually the clutch and brake pedals, the clutch release shaft and on some cars that did not have them from the factory, the emergency brake operating shafts in the rear brake backing plate assemblies. Some of these lube points may be a little hard to find so to be sure to look at the Instruction Book or information supplied by Les Andrews and others.

While the hood is opened, spray a little lubricant on the hood hinges. You will be surprised how much better the hood opens and closes. A drop of oil on the door hinges and latch assemblies is also necessary. Spend some time and lubricate all of these areas of your Model A.

If your Model A is equipped with a Mitchell overdrive, you have to periodically lubricate the slip spines in the drive shaft. This is accessed by removing a plug in the torque tube and installing a special grease fitting. Refer to the Mitchell instructions for this procedure.

Now, after a complete and thorough lubrication, treat your Model A to a good cleaning, both inside and out and after polishing the exterior paint and bright work, you will be ready for a whole season of fun.



Tech Tip

Keeping a log book.

I keep a little pocket size note book in my car. In the front I have all the necessary information such as my name and address, the year, body style "VIN" Number and License Plate Number. I also include the part numbers of any special components that are not stock Model A such as aftermarket points, condenser, coil, fan belt etc. This makes it a lot easier should I be on a tour and away from home and need a replacement part.

I log the date and mileage when I perform maintenance or a repair. This makes it easy to keep up with routine maintenance and not let things get put off too long. In the back, I recorded a brief history of the car. When I purchased it, previous owners interest, past history etc. This information will be much appreciated by a new owner.