

## Time to Get Your Model A Ready for the Road

Spring is just around the corner and it is time to get your Model A ready for the road. To maximize the enjoyment of driving your Model A, a little maintenance now will go a long way toward heading off problems in the future. When new, our little cars were very reliable and with a little effort they can continue to be just as reliable today. Of course, if your Model A has not been properly maintained or correctly restored and is all worn out, it will take a little more than an oil change and a tune-up to bring it up to a satisfactory level of reliability. Personally, I would rather spend a few hours in the garage at home doing some routine maintenance than be stranded on the side of the road with a problem. Of course, there is no guarantee that you will never have a problem with your Model A, but routine maintenance will go a long way to keep problems to a minimum. I keep a small log book in all of my cars which greatly helps with remembering when maintenance and repairs were performed.

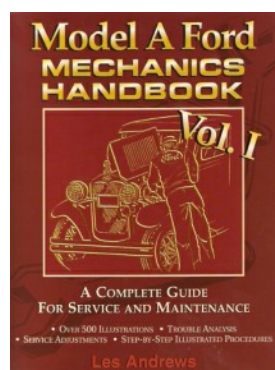
There are very good Maintenance and Safety Check lists in the appendix section of the Model A Ford Handbook, Vol. #1 by Les Andrews. How much maintenance is necessary and how often maintenance items need to be performed depends on how you use your Model A. Regardless of how we use our cars, all owners should perform the "Every Fuel Stop" and "Monthly" checks listed on page A-1 of the Handbook.

For those owners who only drive their cars a few hundred miles a year, mainly just for attending local events and club functions, it is actually necessary to perform some items at intervals based on time and not mileage. For the occasionally used Model A, I recommend that once a year the owner performs all the maintenance items on the "1000 miles" list in the Handbook. Transmission and differential fluid levels should also be checked annually. Every 2 years, the chassis should be lubricated and, to prevent rust and corrosion, the radiator should be drained, flushed and the coolant replaced. It is also a good idea to annually perform a complete Safety Check as listed on page A-2.

If you are using your Model A for long distance touring, perform the necessary maintenance as determined by mileage with the exception of oil change interval. With the availability of modern engine oils and because some owners have equipped their engines with oil filters, oil change intervals can be extended. Prior to a tour, do a complete safety check plus check all fluid levels. Inspect the spare parts, tools and supplies you are taking with you. If you have non-original type components on your car such as electronic ignition, be sure to include the necessary spare components should a failure occur.

Be sure your jack is in good working order. Use the jack to jack up your car, just as you would do if you were changing a flat tire. Some hydraulic jacks may work fine when new but after many years rattling around under the rear seat will refuse to work when needed. Personally, I like a mechanical jack just for that reason. A scissor jack or a mechanical bottle jack from earlier G M Pick-up's work well and are not expensive. A few wooden blocks can be very helpful when changing a flat.

It may appear that it is a lot of work to perform the maintenance and safety check items listed in the Handbook but if your Model A is in good condition, most of these items can be accomplished in just a few minutes. Remember, it is much easier and definitely a lot more convenient to take care of a small maintenance item in your own garage than try to make a repair on the side of the road.



Mechanical Bottle Jack



Scissor Jack

## Tech Tip

When it comes to changing the oil, there continues to be a lot of discussion about which oil is best. Some owners insist on a particular brand and viscosity and claim the Model A engine will suffer excessive wear if other oils are used. Others say you must use oil with high levels of Zinc or the camshaft will wear out. Actually, almost any oil you can buy today is far better than the oils that were available when our Model A's were new.

I like to use 20-50 viscosity oil especially if the engine has original type babbitt bearings. At highway speeds, the thicker oil provides a little extra protection for the bearings. Valvoline VR-1, 20-50 "Racing Oil" is available at most auto parts stores. VR-1 is not just for race engines, the label on the back of the container says it contains a high level of zinc and is also formulated for older classic and Muscle Cars.

Whatever oil you use, changing it at regular intervals will help keep your engine clean and free of sludge.

