

## Time to Repair the Electrical System

It is the beginning of a new year and it may be a good time to address some questions that have often come up involving the electrical system of our Model A's. The electrical system as Henry designed it is quite simple and when new, our cars were reliable, dependable and required little maintenance. After years of poor repairs and amateur modifications, many owners find their Model A's are not very reliable and are prone to refusing to run at the most inconvenient time. If your Model A fits in this category, it may be time to overhaul the electrical system. While very good information is available in the Les Andrews series of repair manuals, the following are some tips that may help.

Purchase good quality wiring harnesses from one of the major parts suppliers. Do not look for the cheapest price but the best quality. If you are using turn signals, main wiring harnesses are available that incorporate the additional wires required for turn signals and you won't have to add them later. Besides the main harness and the harness from the junction box to the instrument panel, there is other wiring that also may need to be replaced. Be sure to inspect the headlight, cowl light, tail light sockets and replace or rewire as necessary. If you have a good soldering iron, some rosin core solder and a little wire, you can rewire the sockets yourself. The result will be better than some of the poor quality replacement components available. Also, do not forget about the wire in the center of the horn rod and the ignition switch to distributor cable. A kit is available for the horn rod but if you are using an original Pop-Out Ignition Switch, you may want to have an expert rebuilt this component. Other wiring that may be in need of replacing is the wiring for an electric windshield wiper and interior dash and dome lights. At this time, also consider installing a fuse assembly to help protect the electrical system from damage should a short circuit occur. Just be sure to carry extra fused with you.

Battery cables are also part of the electrical system. You will find good quality cables from a major supplier are sized correctly and will fit better than generic cables that you will find at your local auto parts store. This may also be a good time to install a master electrical disconnect switch and an extra ground cable from the battery frame ground connection to the engine/transmission assembly. If you need to replace the battery, consider an Optima battery. While a little more expensive, Optima batteries will hold a charge a lot longer, have more cold cranking amps and can last as long as 12-14 years before needing to be replaced.

Other components of the electrical system that may need to be rebuilt or replaced are the starter, generator and distributor. If these components are not in good order, you will never experience the reliability that was originally designed into your Model A. Parts and information is readily available for those owners who want to rebuild these components themselves or rebuilding services are available from the better parts suppliers. If you want to install an alternator, one with 30 amp output and positive ground work well and do not require modifications to your stock wiring. Alternators with higher output will require modifications. It is not necessary to convert your car to 12 volts if the original 6 volt electrical system is in good condition.

The Model A horn may be the most important component on the car. There is nothing that identifies with the Model A Ford more than the sound of a good operating "Ahooga" horn. I find when driving my Model A, there will often be someone who wants me to honk the horn. Most of the time, a good careful cleaning and lubrication of the motor is all that is necessary to restore a horn to operating condition. For a horn that may need more extensive repair, rebuild kits are available or you can send your horn to one of the experts for a major overhaul. A Model A is not a Model A without a good operating Ahooga horn.



## Tech Tip

An excellent resource for rebuilding original Pop-Out Ignition Switches is:

Dick Crabtree  
555 Missouri Drive  
Pickstown, SD 57367  
605-487-7229 or 281-615-2261  
[mbcrabtree@aol.com](mailto:mbcrabtree@aol.com)

Dick is also an excellent locksmith and he can repair and restore all the door and deck lid locks and can key the ignition to the door locks and deck lid locks.

