FROM THE BENCH BY CHRIS WICKERSHAM

What Sealers Do I Need for My Model A?

A few weeks ago, one of our members was in the process of replacing the head gasket on his Model A and asked me what to use for a sealer. Actually, there is not just one product that is needed but several different sealers and compounds that are necessary to do the job. The following is a brief discussion of several products I have been using for many years with very good success; products that every Model A mechanic should keep in their tool box. For best results, be sure the sealing surfaces of the parts being assembled are absolutely clean and free of oil or grease. I use acetone or lacquer thinner for the final cleaning of the sealing surfaces.

Gasgacinch

This is a rubber cement based product that comes in a can with a dobber built into the cap for applying . This product is also sold under the name "Edelbrock 9300 gasket sealer". I have been using Gasgacinch for years for paper and cork gaskets. It is very easy to use and provides a long lasting seal and is an excellent product for pan, front and side covers, water pump, flywheel housing and transmission gaskets. It can also be used as a belt dressing if you have a squeaking fan belt.

Spray Copper Coat

This is the best sealer I have found for head gaskets. For best results, spray on several coats on both sides of the head gasket and assemble while the sealer is wet. Copper Coat is sold thru K & W and Permatex. Spray Copper Coat is also good for differential gaskets when it is necessary to use a sealer. Just lay the caskets out flat and spray a light coat on both sides of each gasket.

Silicone RTV "Gasket Maker"

This product comes in a tube and is usually blue, orange, gray or black in color and is the stuff that a lot of owners try to use for every repair. When used properly, this is a very good product but many problems have resulted in its overuse and in applications where it is not appropriate. I use RTV silicone very sparingly, usually just a little for installing the one piece front crank seal and when installing the pan, just a dab where the pan rail gaskets meet the cork seal on the rear main bearing cap. The one place I highly recommend it be used is in place of the gasket when installing the water outlet on the top of the head. I DO NOT use a gasket in this location because of the chance of breaking the ears off the water outlet when torquing the head. This is more critical with high compression heads and the higher head nut torque required. Do NOT use this stuff for installing studs in the block. Little globs of silicone can find its way into the water jackets and stop up the radiator. It is NOT a good sealer for this and similar applications.

High Temperature Silicone

This is the stuff similar to RTV Silicone but only will cure with heat. It is usually red or orange. The only place I use it is when installing manifold gaskets. Along with the gland rings, some high temp silicone on the gaskets will help make a good, long lasting seal around the intake and exhaust ports.

Permatex #1 - Hard Setting, Fast Drying

Apply a little hard setting Permatex between cylinders 1&2 and 3&4 when changing a head gasket where the block or head surface is not perfect. It is also good when a machined sealing surface of a casting has a defect that may cause a leak. Assemble the components while the Permatex is wet. Do not let it dry before you finish assembling the parts.

Permatex #2 - Non-Hardening

A very good sealer when installing head studs into the block. It will seal well but has a little "give" when the head nuts are torqued. While Non-Hardening #2 Permatex is NOT fuel resistant, it can also be used for oil and water fitting pipe threads but NOT fuel fittings.

Hylomar Sealant

This is a fuel resistant sealer that is very good for sealing the pipe threads of fittings in the fuel system. It is also works well for sealing oil line pipe threads. Hylomar is also sold thru Permatex.

Anti-seize compound

While this is not a sealant, every Model A mechanic should have some in his tool box. Put a little on the threads of the nuts that attach the manifolds to the engine, the nuts and bolts for the muffler head pipe to the exhaust manifold connection clamp. A little on the threads of the spark plugs is also not a bad idea. If you have an aluminum cylinder head, be sure to use anti-seize on the spark plug threads or you may not be able to get them out. Do not use Anti Seize on the threads of the head nuts. It is not a good lubricant for this application. Use a drop of engine oil.

Tech Tip

Shrinking Paper Gaskets

Sometimes when we are using paper gaskets we find they have shrunk a little and the holes will not line up. This can be frustrating but there is a very easy and quick fix. Just place the gasket out flat in the bottom of a sink and add a little water. After a few minutes, you will find the gasket is once again the correct size. Paper gaskets will dry out and shrink with age and a little water will cure the problem. You do not have to wait until the gasket is completely dry, it can be installed while it is still damp. So don't throw out those old paper gaskets, just put them in a little water and they will be as good as new.