

Keeping the Engine Compartment Clean

After putting a lot of work into a restoration or even if you have just cleaned and detailed the engine and other under hood components of your Model A, you want to keep it that way. It is easy to keep the engine area looking its best if your Model A was restored as a show car and rarely driven but how about those of us who often drive our cars and participate in long distance tours. One area that is especially a problem is the left side of the engine where the oil fill and breather tube are located. Normal blow-by and oil droplets from the oil fill tube can wet the driver's side of the engine including the water inlet tube and hoses, wiring, firewall, pedals and floor boards. The starter is one component that is especially susceptible to being coated with a film of oil. Not only does the oil make a mess and collects a lot of dust and dirt but oil can deteriorate the radiator hoses and electrical wiring insulation. So, in order to keep the engine area of our Model A's clean and presentable, we can either routinely clean up the oily mess or try to reduce the amount of oil that is expelled from the oil fill and breather tube, and direct what is left out of the engine compartment in a manner that keeps everything cleaner. So how do we do this?

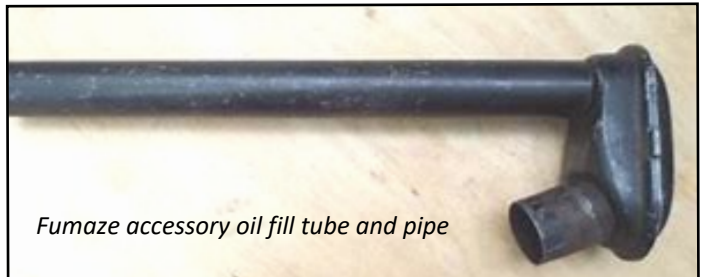
First, let us take a look at the evolution of the Model A oil fill tube. The Model A oil fill tube performs two functions. First it provides a means of adding oil to the engine and second, it provides a means for the engine to "breathe". All internal combustion engines must have a way to allow excess products of combustion that may pass by the rings (blow-by) to exit the crankcase and allow fresh air to enter the crankcase. The Model A oil fill tube was designed with internal baffles that were supposed to only allow fumes to escape but trap and return any oil droplets back into the crankcase. This original arrangement proved less than satisfactory and the baffles received two re-designs to attempt to reduce the amount of oil droplets that were allowed to exit the engine. The improved baffles did help some but the problem still persisted.

Soon after the Model A was introduced, accessory manufacturers offered many "fixes" for the oil droplet, blow by problem. Different design oil fill tube caps and special baffles or screens that went inside the tube claimed to prevent this from happening while other designs incorporated a pipe or flexible tube that directed the fumes and droplets down and to the rear of the engine compartment.



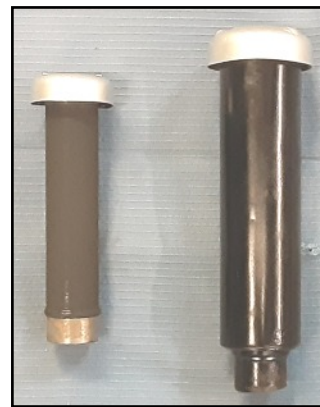
Accessory oil fill cap with flexible vent hose

The Fumaze accessory oil filler is the one that I like best. It has a handy cover that can be opened to add oil to the engine and a pipe that directs the fumes and oil vapor down and to the rear of the left engine splash pan. This helps to keep most of the droplets and fumes out of the engine compartment and definitely keeps the left side of the engine compartment much cleaner. These "fixes" all help to a degree, none completely solve the problem.



Fumaze accessory oil fill tube and pipe

The engineers at Ford were well aware of this ongoing problem so as part of the design upgrades for the 1932 Model B engine, the oil fill tube was made substantially larger with a much more sophisticated baffle design. While not perfect, the Model B oil fill tube is much better at controlling oil droplets while still allowing the engine to



Model A Oil Fill Tube (Left)
Model B oil Fill Tube (Right)

properly breath. The Model B oil filler tube and cap is a direct replacement for the Model A. At this time, they are not being reproduced so you will need to **look** for a good used one

In summary, to control the oil droplets coming from the oil fill tube, be sure the oil fill tube is in good condition and all the baffles are in place. The later design oil fill tubes work better than the early design. Accessory fillers with a separate vent tube will help reduce the mess in the engine compartment. The Model B oil fill tube and cap is the best solution to control blow-by and keep oil droplets from making a mess in the engine compartment.

Tech Tip

If you are cleaning a used oil fill tube, DO NOT use a bead blaster or a sand blaster. The sand or glass beads will get into the baffles and are almost impossible to remove. Glass beads or sand can do major damage if it gets into the crankcase. A good way to clean the inside of a used oil fill tube is to immerse it in solvent for a day or two and then wash out with dish washing detergent and hot water. This may have to be repeated several times if the tube is excessively dirty.