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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION • NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

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CARBURETOR FLOAT SATURATION REPORTS

Champion Parts Rebuilders, Inc. of Oakbrook, Illinois, recently submitted to the PRP detailed information on carburetor float saturation in a variety of models. According to Champion, which services over one million carburetors per year, problems have been encountered with nitrophyll carburetor floats. The floats are made of a closed cell, plastic composition material but begin to absorb gasoline after a few years of service, according to Champion. This can cause carburetor flooding and thus creates a potential for engine compartment fires.

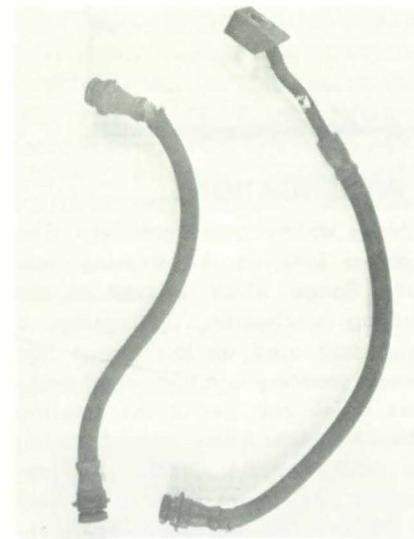
Champion reports that among 1974 and 1975 carburetors being serviced, saturated floats run as high as 80%. Carburetors affected include a wide variety of models manufactured by Holley, Carter, Autolite and Rochester.

The PRP has recently received additional saturated floats from BOB CHESTER's AUTO SERVICE, Arlington, Texas; AUTOMOTIVE CITY SERVICE CENTER, San Francisco, California; and AUTO BRAKE CORPORATION, Norfolk, Virginia. Two floats were removed from 1974 Mustang II's, while a third float was removed from a 1974 Pinto. Approximately 21 carburetor float saturation problems have been reported by program members over the past three years.

The NHTSA recently closed an investigation into carburetor float saturation in Rochester QuadraJet carburetors installed in 1965-1972 General Motors vehicles. The case (C-44) was closed with no finding of a defect, primarily because of a lack

of significant, safety-related consequences. The agency is still interested in problems associated with later model vehicles, however, especially any float saturation situation which may have caused engine compartment fires.

PLYMOUTH/DODGE BRAKE HOSE CRACKS



Based upon a large number of parts received from PRP members, the NHTSA has recently opened an engineering analysis into brake hoses on Chrysler Corporation vehicles. The analysis involves brake hoses from 1973 and 1974 Plymouth Valiants and Dodge Darts. The hoses allegedly develop cracks and splits near the fitting.

During the past year, PRP shops have contributed brake hose from 17 vehicles: six 1973 Plymouth Valiants,

two 1973 Dodge Darts, seven 1974 Valiants and two 1974 Darts. The average mileage on the 1973 vehicles was 44,000, ranging from 16,493 to 73,010. The average mileage on the 1974 vehicles was 29,000, ranging from 23,780 to 39,253.

Contributing brake hoses in the past year were WISCONSIN DOT, Madison, Wisc.; KOLESNIK's SERVICE, Rochester, New York; DAY-NITE AUTO, Kaukauna, Wisconsin; AUTO BRAKE CORPORATION, Norfolk, Virginia; WOODY's GARAGE, Montoursville, Pennsylvania; A. RUTH's GARAGE, Colonie, New York; MR. BRAKE #9, Pocatello, Idaho, and BUD JONES SERVICE, Delmar, New York. We'd like to thank these shops as well as others who have contributed suspect brake hoses during the past three years. Additional information on this potential problem would be appreciated.

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS

As we begin a new PRP year (July, 1978-June 1978), we'd like to take time out to thank two special shops which have contributed parts and information to the program for twelve consecutive months: AUTO BRAKE CORPORATION, Norfolk, Virginia and HARRY's AUTO SERVICE, Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Our sincerest thanks to George Casper of Auto Brake and Harry Billings of Harry's, as well as their staffs, for their continuing contributions to automotive safety.



WANTED

**FAILED
AUTOMOTIVE
PARTS**

NHTSA OPENS THREE NEW INVESTIGATIONS

NHTSA recently opened three new investigations involving Ford Motor Company vehicles and Fiat vehicles. The investigations involve fuel leakage problems, steering mechanism problems and front wheel bearing failures.

Fuel line leakage in 1975 and 1976 Ford Granadas and Mercury Monarchs is being investigated by the agency. The investigation was initiated on the basis of eight complaints of fires in Granadas and Monarchs equipped with V8 engines. Information from the manufacturer indicates at least 75 complaints of fires on the V8 model. There are approximately 568,000 vehicles involved. Fuel leakage allegedly occurs at the point where a small rubber hose connects the metal fuel line to the fuel filter which is attached to the carburetor.

The steering case involves 1973-1975 Pinto, Mustang II and Bobcat

vehicles without power steering. The problem involves the steering coupling flange which is part of the steering mechanism. Allegedly, a pinch bolt used on this flange can loosen, resulting in a number of problems which can permit the steering wheel to rotate freely without turning the wheels of the vehicle. In January of 1978, Ford initiated a recall of 1974 Pinto and Mustang II vehicles for the same problem.

The third investigation involves front wheel bearings on 1973-1977 Fiat 128 and X-1/9 vehicles which can result in loss of vehicle control due to wheel looseness, lockup or separation. Twelve complaints of such failures have been received by NHTSA, and information obtained from the manufacturer indicated over 900 complaints.

Any information on these cases from our members would be appreciated.

CLUTCH CABLE PROBLEMS ON MUSTANG'S

Last year, BOB's AUTOMOTIVE, Dayton, Ohio, submitted information to the PRP on the possibility of a construction defect in the clutch cable connection on a 1974 Mustang II with 37,714 miles. Allegedly, the connector for the clutch pedal ripped away from the firewall of the vehicle, causing a premature engagement of the clutch. The driver experienced a loss of control but was able to avoid an accident.

Since that time the NHTSA has received five Hotline calls from individuals who have experienced the same problem. Each case has involved breakage at the firewall on 1974 Mustang II's. Reportedly, as the clutch pate wears, the increased pressure on the cable connection at the firewall is too great for the thin gauge firewall metal, and can cause the metal to tear, creating a potentially dangerous situation.

A similar condition on Ford Pintos was mentioned by BOB's AUTOMOTIVE in a recent telephone contact. The Pinto clutch cable is held in place by "spring ears" which reportedly provide the same kind of support as they do for a parking brake cable attached to the backing plate on drum brake-equipped vehicles. The thin gauge metal in the firewall, however, can give way.

Let us know of any similar situations you've seen involving clutch cable connectors.

OOOPs!! Last months News contained a slight defect. The cover photo was printed upside down . . . Sorry!

TELEPHONE CALLS

If the part you'd like to return is too large or you simply haven't the time today to send in an information form, why not give us a (COLLECT CALL) at (703) 257-4500.

THE FORUM

BOB'S AUTOMOTIVE, Dayton, Ohio, mentions a problem with Pontiac Grand Prix axle seals. The leaking seals are common, according to the shop, and reportedly may be due to a tolerance problem—the seals may not be large enough for the axle shaft.

AABLE AUTO SERVICE, San Francisco, California, has informed the PRP of a timing chain problem in a 1977 Plymouth Arrow with 24,960 miles. The vehicle was brought in for service in December, 1977. When the problem was diagnosed

as a faulty timing chain, a Chrysler dealer reportedly replaced it for the customer. Six months later, the vehicle was brought in with the same problem.

WAYNE'S GARAGE, Eugene, Oregon, has submitted information on a misrouted hydraulic pressure hose from a 1975 Mercury Monarch with 21,876 miles. The hose was allegedly misrouted at the factory and lay against the exhaust manifold. This resulted in a break in the hose and subsequent loss of power steering and power brake assist.

TIM'S IMPORT SALES AND SERVICE, Hutchinson, Kansas, has submitted a rack and pinion steering gear from a Fiat 128. **TIM'S** states that the gear had no grease and appeared not to have been lubricated by the factory. Due to this condition, the driver experienced a loss of control, although no accident resulted. In a related situation, the shop has reportedly seen at least four Fiat 128's in which the rack and pinion support bushing was not properly anchored, causing a severe shimmy.

CRACKED, SPLIT AND LEAKING FUEL HOSES: Seen Any Lately?

The NHTSA has recently initiated a study to review the performance of flexible fuel hoses used on all types of motor vehicles. The study is being conducted as part of a wider project on the use of elastomers in the automotive industry. Elastomers are synthetic compounds which have the elastic properties of natural rubber but resist the action of oils and fuels. Such compounds are used in the manufacture of fuel hoses in order to provide needed flexibility.

Failed or about-to-fail hoses are urgently needed. In addition, any information about the brand and grade of gasoline used in the vehicle would be most helpful.

The PRP has received a number of cracked fuel hoses from members over the past year, most of which were leaking fuel at the time they were removed. Hoses have been received from Ford, Chevrolet, Oldsmobile and Fiat vehicles. The most serious failure was reported in 1976 by **VANOWEN BRAKE AND WHEEL**, North Hollywood, California. Allegedly, a cracked fuel hose leaking at the carburetor end on a 1973 Ford caused an engine compartment fire which led to loss of vehicle control and a subsequent accident.

In addition to **VANOWEN**, we'd like to thank **ALPINE AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE**, Lakewood, Colorado; **LINCOLN TECHNICAL INSTITUTE**, Union, New Jersey; **BECTON AUTO REPAIR**, Savannah, Georgia; **AUTOMOTIVE MAINTENANCE, INC.**, Sarasota, Florida; **W & S SERVICE, INC.**, Wilmington, Delaware; **BOB CHESTER'S AUTO SERVICE**, Arlington, Texas; **CAPITAL AUTOMOTIVE**, Lincoln, Nebraska; and **MUSTEN AUTO SERVICE**, Winston-Salem, North Carolina for their contributions.

Please send us whatever information you currently have on flexible fuel hose problems.



TIRE GRADING REGULATIONS ANNOUNCED

Regulations for uniform tire grading will become effective in 1979, according to the NHTSA. A simplified guide will be published along with the ratings to aid the consumer in comparing treadwear, traction and temperature resistance.

Beginning March 1, 1979 for bias-ply tires and September 1, 1979 for bias-belted tires, a paper label listing the respective grades must be attached to the tire tread. Six months after these dates, manufacturers will be required to mold the grading information into the tire sidewall.

The treadwear grade will reflect the relative tread life compared to other types or brands of tires based upon actual performance over a test course established by the NHTSA.

Traction will be identified by the symbols A, B, C for clarity. A tire graded A would offer the best traction.

Temperature resistance grades are of importance to the motorist, NHTSA says, because excessively high temperatures can cause the material of the tire to degenerate and can reduce tire life, leading to sudden failure. Tests for this property are conducted under controlled laboratory conditions to produce a comparative grading system.

OUTSTANDING PARTICIPANTS

Our Outstanding Participants are those that have sent to the PRP at least one component or item of information during the current month. Since we have begun a new program year (July, 1978 thru June, 1979) all shops are considered new participants this month. During July, 1978, 33 shops have started the PRP off to a successful year by sending in components or information.

REGION 5
 FRENCHY'S SERVICE STATION
 Duluth, MN
 HENNEPIN COUNTY
 Hopkins, MN
 MINNESOTA GAS CO.
 Minneapolis, MN
 RICHFIELD WHEEL ALIGNMENT
 Minneapolis, MN
 WISCONSIN D.O.T.
 Madison, WI

REGION 9
 L.A.D. AUTO ELECTRIC
 Spokane, WA
 MEADE & GREENLEE GARAGE
 Salem, OR
 PUGET SOUND POWER & LIGHT CO.
 Renton, WA

REGION 9A
 AUTOMOTIVE CITY SERVICE CENTER
 San Francisco, CA
 EUROPEAN AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE
 Hollywood, CA
 JASON AUTO PARTS
 Van Nuys, CA
 RICHARDS AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE
 Los Angeles, CA
 VANOWEN BRAKE & WHEEL
 North Hollywood, CA

REGION 4
 TAYLOR'S GARAGE & SERVICE
 STATION
 Akron, OH
 WADE'S ALL CAR SERVICE
 Lansing, MI



REGION 7
 BOB CHESTER'S AUTO SERVICE
 Arlington, TX
 LEACH AUTO SUPPLY
 Dallas, TX

REGION 6
 AUTO HOSPITAL
 Lincoln, NB
 D. GARTNER'S AUTO SERVICE
 Chicago, IL
 SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTS
 McGaw Park, IL
 TIM'S IMPORT SALES & SERVICE
 Hutchinson, KS

REGION 0
 HARRY'S AUTO SERVICE
 Great Barrington, MA
 HENNIKER AUTOMOTIVE
 Henniker, NH

REGION 1
 KOLESNIK'S SERVICE STATION
 Rochester, NY
 TECHNICAL TRAINING SCHOOL
 McKees Rock, PA
 VINS MOTOR SERVICE CORP.
 Brooklyn, NY
 W & S SERVICE INC.
 Wilmington, DE

REGION 2
 BILLY W. RILEY FRONT END &
 ALIGNMENT SERVICE
 Springfield, VA
 NED YOUNG
 Takoma Park, MD
 SUPERIOR WHEEL ALIGNMENT &
 BRAKE SERVICE
 Charlotte, NC

REGION 3
 BIG BRAKE SAFETY CENTER
 Gulfport, MS
 WALES GARAGE
 Ft. Lauderdale, FL

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