A Temperature Gauge!

by Tom Endy

The Model A Ford did not come equipped with a temperature gauge. Knowing the water temperature is very important as you can then take steps to avoid overheating the engine. Early in the Model A era an accessory radiator cap was offered that incorporated a thermometer on the top of the cap, visible from the driver's seat. If the early attempt was inaccurate, the repos are even worse. The temperature probe associated with the thermometer is not actually immersed in water. It is located above the radiator baffle and is at best measuring only steam and an occasional splash of water.

For an accurate measurement of the water, a probe for a temperature gauge should be inserted into the water as it is leaving the engine. This is best accomplished by placing it in the water outlet casting that bolts to the top front of the head. Water is entering this casting from the head on its way to the top of the radiator. The water at this point is about as hot as it is going to get. (Water boils at 212° at sea level).

Accessory temp gauges can be either mechanical or electrical. The mechanical type is best suited for a Model A. Electrical temp gauges are only available in 12 volts. If a Model A has a 12 volt system the electrical type can be used, however you will need to figure a way to shut off power to the gauge as turning the ignition key off won't do it.

Most mechanical temp gauges on the market come with a six-foot length of mechanical cable that cannot be altered. Therefore the trick is to mount the gauge in a location on the dash that will allow for adequate routing of the cable between the gauge and the probe. A variety of temperature gauges are readily available from most auto parts dealers.

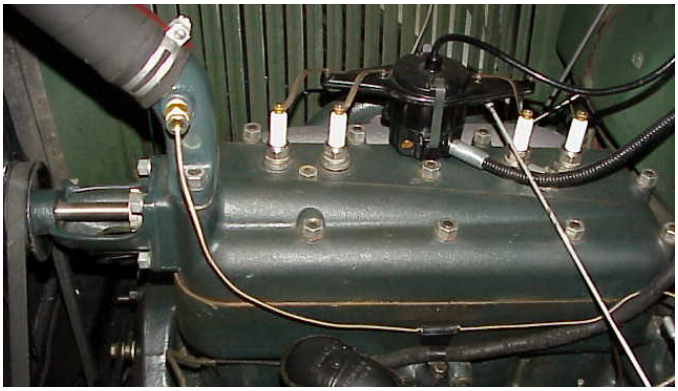
It is also a good idea to install a thermostat in the water system. Most Model A suppliers carry them. They come in 160° and 180° temperatures and mount inside the water hose just above the water outlet casting on top of the head. The thermostat will bring the water temperature up to the proper operational temperature (either 160º or 180º) quickly and will maintain it there. ☺



A 1½-inch SunPro mechanical temperature gauge is installed with a custom made bracket up under the dash rail of a 1931 Victoria.



The little switch in the upper right corner of the bracket is a momentary push button switch wired to the ammeter that will give you a quick peek at the gauge while driving at night.



The six-foot mechanical cable is routed from the gauge to the Dan Eubanks reproduction water outlet casting that has been cast with a temp gauge boss and has been drilled and tapped for your favorite size pipe fitting. Dan locates the fitting on the side of the casting to accommodate an overhead valve head installation. (Dan Eubanks 626-827-4004).