ACCURATE SETTING OF DISTRIBUTOR POINTS

BY RAY VERSAW

If you own a volt-ohmmeter you can set the points on your AIRFLOW distributor quickly and accurately. A volt-ohmmeter can be purchased for the same price as a dwell meter and will do just as good a job setting dwell, plus hundreds of uses around the auto and home. To use the ohmmeter function of your volt-ohmmeter to set your points proceed thusly:

1. At the ignition coil disconnect the small wire going from one side of the coil to the distributor and connect the ohmmeter from that wire to a good ground point. Use the lowest ohmmeter range. This puts the ohmmeter across the distributor points.

2. Turn the engine over until the points are closed and make sure you read zero ohms across the points. If the points are dirty or burned the meter will not read zero ohms, and the points should be corrected before proceeding further.

3. If new points have just been installed, adjust the points to approximately .020". Eyeball gauging is sufficient.

4. With the first three steps accomplished, have a helper crank the engine with the starter. The needle on the meter will pulsate about at some point on the dial. The better damped the meter movement is, the less the pulsating. For properly adjusted points on the AIRFLOW Eight the meter needle should pulsate at around 60% of full scale. Refer to a linear DC voltage scale and not to the non-linear ohm scale.

5. If your needle centers around a reading of less than 60% the points need to be closed, and if the needle reads over 60% the points need to be opened. This is derived from the fact that the dwell angle on Chrysler AIRFLOW Eights is 27 degrees, which is 60% of the 45 degree cam angle. The needle will read the same percentage of full scale as the percentage of time that the points are closed.

6. For DE SOTO AIRFLOW Sixes the meter should read 63% of full scale. Readings in the range of 60% to 66% of full scale are satisfactory for either the Eights or Sixes, and are still more accurate than setting by gauge.

7. The point dwell can be checked without removing the distributor cap however it will have to be removed to make adjustments. Always disconnect the small wire at the coil to make readings and be sure to re-connect the wire after readings and adjustments are nade.

I first learned of using an ohmmeter for the dwell meter function during World War II, when we used ohmmeters to adjust the antenna switching contacts on an early model of airborn radar.

Ray Versaw

Ed. Note. Raymond Falle's monthly electrical page has been delayed in the mail, so we present instead this interesting bit of information.