

TECHNICAL Tips



cause we all have questions

Headlight Grounding

By Frank Daly

We all know that it's a good idea to provide a direct ground for our Airflow headlights, especially in cars that have been restored. That nice new paint makes for a great insulator! When doing my C2, I used a Dremel tool to grind the paint at numerous contact points, but now six years and 14,000 miles later, I find signs of corrosion where I did so. In hindsight, a direct ground wire would have been wise.

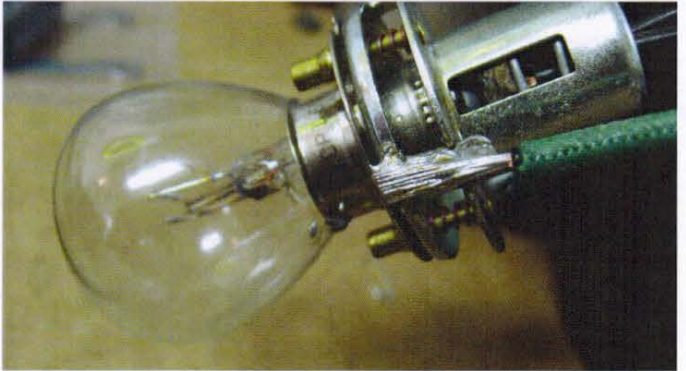
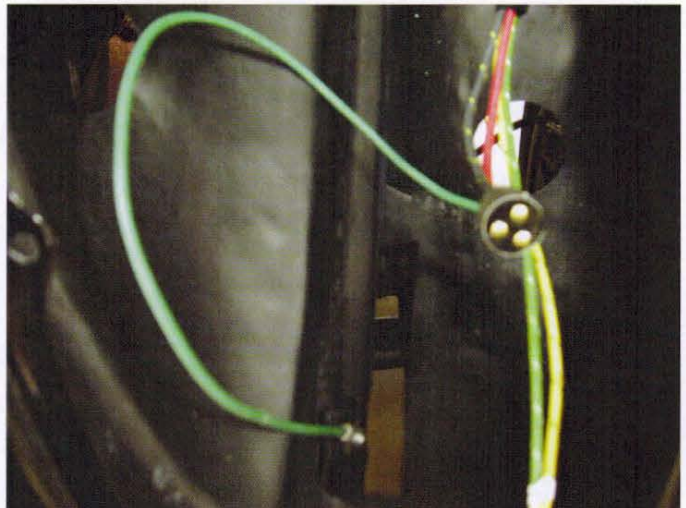
For my CW, I took a different approach. The connector between the wiring harness and the 'buckets' is a three contact connector, although only two of the contacts are used (high beam, low beam). With a small amount of work, the third 'hole' in the connector can be used for a reliable ground connection. Utilizing the small brass buttons and proper-appearing cotton covered wire, available at places such as YnZs Yesterdays Parts, the final installation looks as if it were done at the factory, and it makes it easy to remove the headlight bucket assembly without disconnecting the ground wire if it were directly connected to the bucket or, better yet, the socket.

How to Avoid Wet Feet!

By Jon Clulow

It is April of 1977, a month that brings many a hard rain to the suburbs of Melbourne, Australia. One rainy evening, H.C.P. Spinks makes his way home from work. He is driving on High Street Road at the helm of his 1936 Chrysler C9 Coupe. He starts up High Street Road's Muswell Hill and, as usual, hits 2nd gear overdrive. Then, just as he reaches the top of the hill and makes the curve, it happens. His feet become suddenly and unexpectedly wet.

As many of you would expect, H.C.P. Spinks first attempt was to correct a cowl vent seal failure. But when the weather turned wet and he hit the hilly curve in High Street Road, water sloshed out again!



My headlight sockets were beyond repair, but I found that Headlight Headquarters in Lynn, MA sells these prefocus sockets, and they pop right into the reflector. If you use these new sockets, you can use the prefocus bulbs which are readily available in standard and higher candlepower versions. If you pop one of these modern bulbs into your original prefocus socket, the filament will be rotated 90 degrees. It probably won't make that much difference, but just so you know!

John Spinks, whose father eventually found the cause and solution for under dash leaks, told me the solution to wet feet in our Airflows. If you observe the alligator hood details of Airflows, you will notice a rain gutter at the back of said hood. That gutter will indirectly channel water on your feet. Strong air currents from the engine fan and forward motion slaps rainwater directly against the very top part of Airflow firewalls. When the gutter channels water toward the firewall, water is held in the upper cowl area. Nearly forty years ago, the firewall seal in Airflows began to fail. Water will eventually dump on your floor when you take a hard turn.

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The top of the firewall is a very difficult area to observe and seal. It is well hidden due to the alligator hood obstructing its view and access. One must patch the seam from the engine compartment; this follows the same logic as not patching a roof from the inside. Due to the difficulty of access, a caulk gun is useless. I have used J-B Weld's WaterWeld. Using gloves, hand mix the tube's two-part compound, roll it thinner and press it into the seam by feeling the seam gap. You may have to check your work with a mirror.

Believe me when I tell you that water being dumped under your dash is not a good thing. I have had my signal controller ruined. I've had to replace one of my kick panels. My clock quit working. Electrical shorts could certainly be an issue as well as corrosion. Jim Lightfoot had to deal with corrosion when his coupe quit running (see p. 3 of the July/Aug. Newsletter). Wet socks and shoes are not very comfortable either. You might be thinking, "I won't be driving my Airflow in the rain." However, you will find that nature does not always cooperate with our wishes.

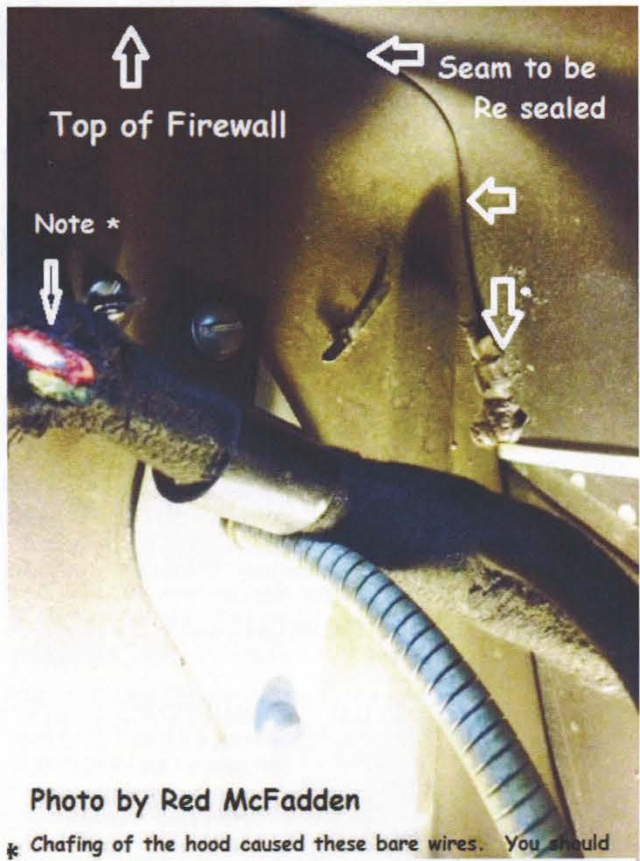


Photo by Red McFadden

* Chafing of the hood caused these bare wires. You should inspect this area as well.