

AEROSPACE INFORMATION REPORT



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VEHICLE ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

RATIONALE

This document has been reaffirmed to comply with the SAE 5-Year Review policy.

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1. SCOPE:

This SAE Aerospace Information Report (AIR) considers the following major areas:

1. Major components and their ratings
2. Selection criteria for optimum design balance for electrical systems
3. Effects of operating conditions and environment on both maintenance and life of components
4. Trouble signals—their diagnosis and cure

1.1 Purpose:

Electrical systems engineering is the modern concept of integrating load requirements with generator/alternator and battery capacity and regarding this electrical equipment as a complete system rather than a collection of independent units. The old adage “a chain is not stronger than its weakest link” is particularly valid for electrical circuits. So great care must be taken in selection of equipment and in considering the operating position and environment in which the equipment is expected to function.

2. REFERENCES:

2.1 Applicable Documents

The following publications form a part of this document to the extent specified herein. The latest issue of SAE publications shall apply. The applicable issue of other publications shall be the issue in effect on the date of the purchase order. In the event of conflict between the text of this document and references cited herein, the text of this document takes precedence. Nothing in this document, however, supersedes applicable laws and regulations unless a specific exemption has been obtained.

2.1.1 SAE Publications: Available from SAE, 400 Commonwealth Drive, Warrendale, PA 15096-0001.

J56	Highway Vehicle Practice
J539a	Voltages for Diesel Electrical Systems
J1343	Information Relating to Duty Cycles and Average Power Requirements of Truck and Bus Engine Accessories
J1908	Surface Vehicle Standard

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3. MAJOR COMPONENTS OF VEHICLE ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS:

3.1 Batteries:

An electrochemical device for converting chemical energy into electrical energy with electrical current being produced by chemical reaction between grids or plates containing, alternately, sponge lead (Pb) in the negative plate and lead peroxide (PbO₂) in the positive plate immersed in an electrolyte of 36% sulfuric acid and 64% water. A fully charged battery contains electrolyte with a specific gravity of 1.270 at 80 °F (26.7 °C). The plates are grouped with PVC separators between positive and negative plates forming an element. Multiple elements of plate groups are placed in cells of a battery case with partitions separating the cells. Each cell has an approximate potential of 2 V; three cells connected in series make up 6-V batteries or six cells connected in series make up 12-V batteries.

3.1.1 Wet-Charged Batteries: Those batteries fully charged and activated at the factory. When not in use, they will slowly “self-discharge”. High temperatures accelerate this condition—at 100 °F (37.8 °C), a battery in a vehicle or in storage will completely discharge without use in 90 days. Storage in a cool place is mandatory. More recent vehicles utilize maintenance free batteries which typically discharge at 2 to 3% per month.

3.1.2 Dry-Charged Batteries: Those batteries fully charged at the factory but the cells are dry of electrolyte. Electrolyte is normally supplied in a plastic bag in correct amount. Such batteries can be stored indefinitely in any environment with no periodic service or recharging necessary during storage. It is “factory fresh” when electrolyte is added and ready for immediate use. Proper activation consists of adding electrolyte of 1.265 specific gravity to each cell. After several minutes, check level again. Once the full electrolyte charge has been added, only add water thereafter. To insure best performance: Check voltage at terminals—if less than 10 V on 12-V battery, it should be replaced. When temperature is 32 °F (0 °C) or when battery and electrolyte are not 60 °F (15.6 °C) or above, battery should be warmed by a boost charge of 15 amps (A) for 10 min—then check temperature of electrolyte. If not 60 °F (15.6 °C) or above, continue boost charge until above 60 °F (15.6 °C).

3.1.3 Battery Ratings:

3.1.3.1 Definition: The Cold Cranking Performance rating is the discharge load in amperes which a new fully charged battery at 0 °F (-17.8 °C) can continuously deliver for 30 s and maintain a terminal voltage equal to or higher than 1.20 V per cell.

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- 3.1.3.2 Reserve Capacity Rating: A newer consideration. This rating is the length of time one can travel at night with minimum electric load and no alternator output. It is expressed at the time in minutes for a fully charged battery at 80 °F (26.7 °C), discharged at a constant 25 A, to reach a voltage of 1.75 V/cell or 10.5 terminal volts.
- 3.1.4 Effect of Temperature on Capacity: The cold rating of a battery is its cranking power at 0 °F (-17.8 °C) normally expressed in watts. The wattage rating is determined in controlled laboratory tests and obtained by multiplying the voltage by the current. The example in cold rating capacity (3.1.3.2) shows $300\text{ A} \times 7.6\text{ V} = 2180\text{ W}$. For heavy-duty service a watt rating of 2500 or better is required. At 0 °F (-17.8 °C), the capacity of a battery at full charge is only 61% of its 80 °F (26.7 °C) normal full charge rating, at -20 °F (-28.9 °C) its capacity is only 45% of the normal 80 °F (26.7 °C) rating. At the same time, the load imposed on the battery by the cold engine increases due to the friction and lack of lubrication. At 0 °F (-17.8 °C) it is 250% greater, at -20 °F (-28.9 °C) it is 350% greater than the normal cranking load at 80 °F (26.7 °C). In other words, at low temperatures, the battery is much smaller, the engine is much larger. Both the battery ratings of 20-h rating at 80 °F (26.7 °C) in ampere-hours and the cold rating at 0 °F (-17.8 °C) should be considered in battery selection to meet vehicle electrical demands.
- 3.1.5 Battery Failures: There are five major reasons why batteries wear out prematurely:
- Deep cycling (the most common cause)
 - Overcharging
 - Excessive vibration
 - High temperature
 - Improper watering
- 3.1.5.1 Deep cycling occurs when a battery carries a large part of the electrical load frequently then is recharged after each discharge period. This happens when:
- Drivers leave lights or radio/transmitter on during extended coffee breaks or rest periods.
 - Low-speed, long-idle periods when battery carrying large load.
 - Night or winter driving when electrical load exceeds generator/alternator capacity.

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3.1.5.1 (Continued):

This deep cycling condition causes the positive plates to grow due to sulfation, then shrink as charging converts sulfate back to lead peroxide. This expansion and contraction cycle loosens plate material so it sheds to the bottom of the battery case. Gradual deterioration takes place until a particularly heavy load occurs, such as a first cold morning start. The engine won't crank. Sudden failures occur when the sediment from plates fills chambers at the bottom of the battery case and a short circuit between positive and negative plate bottoms causes a "dead" cell. This condition terminates the life of a battery.

- Solution:
- (1) Use a higher ampere-hour rated battery with more plates and greater reserve for handling more deep cycles.
 - (2) Select a charging system balanced to the electrical load at idle engine speed. The alternator of proper capacity and voltage regulator should be adjusted to give a slight charge rate with normal lights and other load. Specify the alternator cold output required.

3.1.5.2 Battery overcharge occurs from an excessively high setting of the voltage regulator or by an excessively high electrotemperature in the battery. A tell-tale sign of overcharging is excessive battery water consumption. Normal consumption is about 1 oz/100 h (29.6 cc/100 h). Check the electrolyte temperature with a service thermometer after extended operation—this should not exceed 125 °F (51.7 °C). Excessive temperatures result in rapid deterioration of the battery. Above 150 °F (65.6 °C) ambient temperature, the sealing compound softens and cell covers push up on the positive end. At this sign, severe damage has already been done.

- Solution:
- (1) Reduce voltage regulator setting. Both transistor and vibrating contact type offer external adjustment. Keep track of water consumption and specific gravity reading carefully. The factory settings are usually too high for airline ground support operations.
 - (2) Move battery to a cooler location. Equipment design often compromises the space for locating a battery. It is imperative to move or insulate the battery from "hot spots".

3.1.5.3 Vibration shortens battery life by speeding up shedding and causes plate and separator wear. The battery carrier should securely hold the case of the battery.

- Solution:
- (1) Locate battery where it is subjected to minimum vibration forces.
 - (2) An acid-resistant rubber pad 1/8 in (3 mm) thick placed under the case in the battery carrier sill compensates for irregularities and minimizes localized stresses.
 - (3) Check the carrier hold-down device.

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3.1.5.4 High electrolyte temperature due to excessive charging or “hot spot” environment causes premature wear out. Temperatures over 125 °F (51.7 °C) in the electrolyte cause “boil out” of the electrolyte, corroding terminals, carrier case, and hold-downs.

Solution: (1) Check location in vehicle.
(2) Check charging rate as above.

3.1.5.5 Overwatering causes electrolyte loss and poor performance. Too little acid remains in the electrolyte in each cell and the overflow causes corrosion of terminals and carrier case.

Solution: (1) Don't overwater.

3.1.6 Battery Maintenance: Both shop maintenance and on-vehicle battery care are most important. Service records of each battery throughout its life are very necessary to check preventive maintenance and service.

3.1.6.1 On-Vehicle Maintenance:

3.1.6.1.1 Visual Inspection: Check electrolyte level; clean corrosion off terminals; check tightness of battery cables; inspect for broken case or pushed up cell cover; check tightness of hold-down device.

3.1.6.1.2 Light Load Test: Place a load on the battery by holding the starter switch “on” for 3 s or until engine starts. If engine starts, turn off immediately. Next, turn lights “on”. After 1 min and with lights still “on”, read the voltage with a voltmeter with .01 V divisions. If battery reads 11.7 V or more—the battery is good. Readings less than 11.7 V require the battery be recharged and retested with the above test. If it still fails to read 11.7 V, replace the battery.

3.1.6.1.3 Slow Charge and Boost Charge of Battery: Slow charge is the best method of recharging a discharged battery. A slow charge is at a rate of 5 A for 24 h or at a rate of 7% of ampere hour rating. Full charge of a battery is indicated when cell gravity readings do not increase when checked at three times at intervals 1 h apart (1.230 to 1.310).

A fast or boost charge is at a rate of 50 A for 20 min on light truck applications, or 60 A for 30 min on heavier duty applications. The battery should be given the light load test after recharge by either of the methods of 3.1.6.1.2. Then place battery on “ready status” after making appropriate entries on the battery record.

3.1.6.2 Out-of-Vehicle Maintenance:

- a. Visual inspection as in 3.1.6.1.1. Clean battery thoroughly using 1/2 to 3/4 lb (.23 to .34 kg) of ordinary baking soda to a gallon of water.
- b. Light load test as in 3.1.6.1.2 to determine if battery is good enough to recharge.

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3.2 AC Charging System:

3.2.1 Alternator: An alternator is a belt-driven AC (alternating current) generator that serves two functions in the charging system. It must generate enough electrical power to operate all of the electrical components and keep the battery charged. More recent vehicles employ the alternator to generate electrical energy. An alternator is a small, light-weight component offering the advantage of an output at engine idle, a high output per pound of weight, and a minimum of periodic maintenance. It is superior to the DC generator offering very reliable service. Constructed essentially as a rotor on ball bearings in two end-frames; a stator assembly; 6 silicon diodes; this device develops AC voltages which are rectified by the diodes to a single DC voltage and DC current output. To obtain the highest output with a smoother voltage and current, a three-phase stator is connected to six diodes which together form a "three-phase full wave bridge rectifier". The alternator was developed to meet the higher loads of increasing electrical system demands and also to supply an output even at idle engine speeds. All alternators have a rotor mounted on ball or roller bearings, each having a supply of grease to last for years of service without attention. Current to the coil winding mounted on the rotor is supplied through brushes riding on smooth slip rings. All alternators are self-limiting in maximum output—this occurs as the magnetic field produced by the current in the stator windings opposes in polarity and approaches in value the magnetic field provided by the rotor as the alternator output increases. This causes the alternator to limit its own output to a maximum value. So alternators do not require voltage regulators equipped with current limiting relays.

3.2.1.1 Alternator Types: There are many different types and designs of AC alternators. Some factors which determine design are type of mounting, vibration, belt loading, minimum and maximum rotor speeds, current output, service life required, and environmental factors such as dust, dirt, road splash, or explosive mixtures in the atmosphere. All AC alternators, however, develop three-phase AC voltage which is then rectified to a single DC voltage available at the output terminals. This output occurs even at engine idle, the amount depending on the application.

3.2.1.1.1 Factors Required in Specifying Alternators:

- a. System Polarity: Battery polarity is mandatory for proper connection that will not destroy the diodes. "N" indicates a negative battery ground and "P" indicates positive battery ground. Caution: Do not polarize an alternator like a DC generator.
- b. Cold Output Rating: The output in amps at low (2000 rpm) and high (5000 rpm) speeds and at the specified voltage (14 or 28 V) when the alternator temperature is approximately 80 °F (27 °C).
- c. Hot Output Rating: This is the maximum output at the specified voltage (14 or 28 V) with the alternator temperature stabilized in a laboratory ambient temperature of 80 °F (26.7 °C). (Note: The alternator temperature will be higher than the 80 °F (26.7 °C) ambient when in use on a vehicle.) If the ambient is higher than 80 °F (26.7 °C) the alternator temperature is respectively higher and the output will be correspondingly lower.

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- 3.2.1.1.2 Light-Duty: These are medium load range alternators with hot output ratings up to approximately 50 A. This alternator delivers 5 to 10 A at curb idle. The rotor assembly consists of two iron pole pieces with interlacing fingers mounted over many turns of wire wound over the rotor core mounted on the shaft. This rotor coil is connected electrically to the two slip rings, which are then connected to the battery through brushes and leads. This size rotor (in light-duty) normally has 14 poles. The stator assembly is a “Y” connected 3-phase winding of copper wire mounted on a laminated frame. There is one coil for each pair of rotor poles. With seven coils in series, there will be seven voltages added together to provide the complete winding voltage. With a 14-pole rotor, seven complete cycles of AC voltage will be produced for each rotor revolution. The two other stator windings complete the 3-phase unit. The stator is connected to six press-in type diodes; 3 are in the end frame and 3 in an electrically insulated heat sink. The entire unit is cooled by a fan mounted at the pulley end of the shaft which draws air through the alternator.
- 3.2.1.1.3 Heavy-Duty: These alternators usually use a 16-pole rotor with a “Y” connected stator and all 6 diodes assembled into 2 separate heat sinks. This type of alternator can be applied to heavy-duty truck, marine, or industrial applications requiring current outputs of 60 to 100 A. Output at idle is approximately 25 A.
- 3.2.1.1.4 High Output at Idle: If the application requires higher output at idle engine speed, these alternators supply approximately 40 A at engine speeds of 600 rpm or lower. Special models are available for heavier electrical loads supplying up to 125 A at idle and 175 A at engine speed of 1000 rpm. Applications using this alternator include fire trucks with radios or ground support vehicles with radios.
- 3.2.1.1.5 Special AC Alternators: A totally enclosed brushless model is available requiring oil and air cooling which is designed for very dirty environments.
- 3.2.1.2 Alternator Service: End bearing grease supply should be sufficient for life, however, at time of engine overhaul, the bearings should be checked for rough operation and excessive end play. The fan belt drive should be checked every 30 to 60 days for evidences of slipping or belt breakage. The brushes should never need service except if the vehicle has been used in a very dirty environment.
- 3.2.2 AC Voltage Regulator: The sole function of the voltage regulator in any charging circuit is to limit the alternator voltage to the proper safe value to charge the battery and operate the electrical accessories over the wide range of engine speeds required in an automotive vehicle. Two types are in general use—the double-contact (vibrating) regulator and the transistor regulator.

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3.2.2.1 Double-Contact Regulators: This unit gets its name from the dual set of contacts used on the voltage regulator relay and achieves voltage regulation by controlling the amount of alternator field current. Remembering that alternator voltage is proportional to field current, it is seen that for any given speed, decreasing field current will decrease voltage. By decreasing the field current as the alternator speed increases, a balancing effect is obtained resulting in a constant voltage limited by the voltage regulator unit. This voltage regulator consists of a magnetic coil that reacts on a moveable armature with upper and lower contacts with spring tension in one direction. The pull of the magnetic coil, which is controlled by field winding current, moves the armature contact back and forth or to “vibrate” to control the output voltage at a seemingly flat output. The higher the engine speed, the faster the points vibrate. Vibration frequency varies up to 300 cycles per second resulting in a good control of the voltage value. This voltage regulator is called a “vibrating contact” type.

As the AC alternator begins to operate and the speed increases, the alternator voltage will increase in value above the battery voltage. The alternator is then charging the battery and supplying its own field current. At alternator idle speed of 1000 rpm with battery voltage of 12.0 V and regulator spring setting on lower contacts of 13.8 V, the voltage range (12.0 to 13.8) is not sufficient to pull the armature of the voltage regulator. So throughout the 0 to 1000 rpm speed range, the lower contacts remain closed. As the alternator speed goes from 1000 to 2000 rpm, the voltage increases and exceeds the 13.8 V spring setting and the spring tension is overcome. When the lower contacts are opened the alternator field current is diverted through a resistor in series with the field winding. This reduces the field current and the alternator output voltage is correspondingly reduced. The spring then can reclose the lower contacts. This cycle repeats as often as 50 times per second to limit the alternator voltage to 13.8 V at 2000 engine rpm.

As the speed goes higher, the field current must be further decreased to limit the voltage to 13.8 value. The voltage regulator unit will automatically lower the field current by changing the relationship between open and closed periods in a cycle. This “vibrating” contact is now open longer than the closed period. At 3000 rpm the voltage regulator will “float” so both contacts remain constantly open. So between 1000 and 3000 rpm, the contacts “vibrate” staying open progressively longer periods of time till at 3000 rpm, they are open all the time.

As the engine speed goes higher than 3000 rpm, the armature contact will close on the upper contact which is set at 14.0 V. Current now flows directly to ground through a resistor. The field current then decreases to 0 causing the spring to open the upper contacts. This “vibration” cycle is very rapid (up to 300 times per second at 8000 alternator rpm—the field current may be reduced to 0.1 A). Note that the contact periods have reversed and are closed longer on the upper contact than they are open.

In summary, both the lower contacts and upper contacts operate automatically to provide the field current needed at various speeds to achieve voltage limitation.

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- 3.2.2.1.1 Voltage Regulator Operation With Load Changes: Electrical load is determined by the state of charge of the battery plus the number of accessories in operation. As the battery charge decreases and more accessories are turned on, the current demand from the alternator increases. As the current demand increases, more field current is needed to develop the required voltage. For any given speed, the voltage regulator will change its closed and open periods to provide more field current as the alternator output increases.

Assume the electrical accessories draw 30 A and the maximum output of the alternator is 40 A. With a fully charged battery (battery will then draw about 2 A holding current) the total output is 32 A and the voltage regulator will operate to limit voltage to 13.8 V.

Now assume a discharged battery so that it would accept 20 A charging rate at 13.8 V. With the 30 A accessory load, the total current requirement is 50 A. But the alternator is capable of only 40 A, so the accessories will get 30 A, the battery 10 A for charging rate at a voltage of some value less than 13.8 V. The setting of the lower contact being at 13.8 V, this means that the lower contact remains closed even though the alternator is operating at high speed. The voltage regulator unit does not necessarily "vibrate" at all times through the 1000 to high speed range if the battery is in discharged condition. If battery is charged and load is low, the voltage regulator will vibrate.

- 3.2.2.1.2 Temperature Compensation: Since a battery is subjected to a wide range of operating temperatures and requires high voltage to charge a cold battery, low voltage to prevent overcharge of a hot battery, the voltage regulator contains three temperature compensation devices. All three operate together to give a lower setting when hot, a high setting when cold (14.0 V at 60 °F (15.6 °C) 13.0 V at 180 °F (82.2 °C).

- 3.2.2.1.3 The Field Relay Unit: This is a simple magnetic switch that is made to close when the field relay coil winding is energized. The contacts are spring loaded to separate when the coil is de-energized. The primary function of the field relay is to provide a low-resistance connection between the battery and the voltage regulator unit coil and also to disconnect the alternator field from the battery when the ignition switch is turned off. When the ignition switch is turned on, the field relay closes.

Some voltage regulators have no field-relay. In these, a special ignition switch having a separate set of contacts for the field current circuit eliminates the need for the field relay.

- 3.2.2.1.4 Types of Double-Contact Regulators:

- a. Three unit regulator contains a double-contact type voltage regulator, a field relay, and an indicator lamp relay. These are used in charging systems utilizing either an indicator lamp or ammeter.
- b. Two unit regulator contains a double-contact type voltage regulator and a field relay.
- c. Single unit regulator contains only a double-contact type voltage regulator with charging systems using an ammeter only. A special ignition switch is used to energize the field circuit.

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- 3.2.2.1.5 Double-Contact Regulator Service: The voltage regulator is always covered and sealed to prevent entrance of abrasive materials. It is shock mounted to prevent effects of vibration from affecting operation. Normally no periodic service is required.

If erratic operation occurs, the points should be cleaned. Erratic voltage readings on a voltmeter is a sign that service is required. Check for loose connections. Then clean the contact points using a strip of #400 silicon carbide paper folded over and pulled back and forth between the contacts. After cleaning, the contacts should be washed with alcohol or trichloroethylene to remove residue.

- 3.2.2.2 Transistor Voltage Regulator: This is a completely static unit containing no moving parts. Consisting of resistors, capacitors, diodes, and transistors mounted on a printed circuit board. It limits the alternator voltage to a safe value. Resistors and capacitors are not new in the electrical field. Now this "transistor voltage regulator" is in widespread use.

The transistor regulator performance is superior in many ways to the voltage regulator having vibrating contacts. With no moving parts, a maintenance-free service life of long duration results. This regulator is quite stable since the voltage setting is not affected by length of service, mounting position, or alternator output and speed. Higher field currents can be withstood than can be handled by the double-contact voltage regulator.

- 3.2.2.2.1 Operating Principle: All models of the transistor regulator contain the same basic internal circuitry. It operates electronically to alternately "turn off" and "turn on" the voltage across the field winding. This switching action between open-close-open can occur at a rate as low as 10 times per second or as high as 7000 times per second. A voltage sensitive or zener diode is used to detect voltage changes in the system. When the voltage rises to a predetermined limit, the zener completes the driver transistor base circuit. This turns the driver transistor on which allows a power transistor to turn off and open the field circuit of the alternator. When the voltage drops, the zener opens the driver base circuit, turning the driver off and allowing the power transistor to turn on and close the field circuit. This repeats itself very rapidly while the regulator is operating. The zener derives its operating voltage from an adjustable resistance which allows the voltage to be set at various set points.

The circuitry is built up with transistors and resistors, diodes in combination to achieve the regulation. Full protection for the circuitry is given by suppression diodes which abort out any damaging currents. A thermistor which increases or decreases its resistance with temperature automatically compensates the output to a lower setting during hot weather and a higher setting during cold weather. A filter capacitor smoothes out the system voltage variations and gives very stable voltage control. This all solid-state regulator has no moving parts. All components are attached to a printed circuit board mounted in a finned aluminum case and requires no service, and is sealed at the factory. Transistor regulators are designed for use with self-current-limiting alternators (3 A maximum field current).

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3.2.2.2.2 Installation and Adjustments: The aluminum regulator case is not used as a ground. All connections are brought to external terminals making the regulator suitable for positive or negative ground installations. On positive ground systems, the regulator operates between the field and the ground (A circuit). On negative ground systems, it operates between the field and positive output (B circuit). Be sure the application circuitry wiring is checked.

Voltage is easily adjusted by removing the plug in the regulator case to expose the adjusting screw. Turning this screw, the operating voltage may be raised or lowered as desired.

The transistor regulator being all solid-state, will operate in any position. Care must be taken to see that any water, which may find its way into the case, will drain out through the drain holes provided. The reliability of any regulator depends on the wiring at installation. Be sure wire is adequate size and attached to terminals tightly.

CAUTION: Never attempt to ground or jump the field terminal. Any attempt will permanently damage a transistor regulator.

CAUTION: Be sure the regulator is wired for the correct ground polarity. Do not charge or boost the battery or install it backwards.

3.2.2.2.3 Service of Transistor Regulators: Set the voltage adjustment between 13.8 and 14.2 V as indicated on the voltmeter across the battery terminals. The engine should be running at a fast idle (1000 to 1500 rpm). The battery must be fully charged when setting the regulator adjustment and all electrical loads off.

To check the regulator itself, disconnect the field wire from the regulator and connect it to the negative regulator terminal while operating at fast idle. If output is now obtained, the regulator is faulty and should be replaced. Do not run at this condition any longer than necessary as a high voltage may develop which could damage the regulator.

If the charging rate is excessive and cannot be lowered, remove the field wire from the regulator. If output drops, the regulator should be replaced. This applies to both positive and negative ground systems.

Connection diagrams come with all transistor regulators. Be sure to follow the correct diagram for either ammeter or charge light circuits. Certain types of diesel powered equipment may not use an ignition or "run" switch. On these units, an oil pressure switch may be used to energize the AC charging system.

3.2.3 Wiring Circuit: The wiring circuit is just as important a part of the AC charging circuit as the electrical units themselves. Undersize wire or loose connections between the regulator and the junction block will cause a high charge rate to the battery. High resistance resulting from loose or corroded connections between the junction block and battery will cause a lowering of the charging rate to the battery.

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- 3.2.3.1 Periodic Wiring Servicing: A visual inspection often reveals useful information about the condition of the charging system. All wiring should be periodically inspected for damage and loose or corroded terminals should be tightened and cleaned.
- 3.2.3.2 Electrical Grounding Practice: Grounding of electrical circuits should be in accordance to SAE J1908.
- 3.2.4 Troubleshooting the AC Charging System: AC charging system circuit are completely different from DC charging system circuits. None of the troubleshooting checks outlined for DC systems can be used on AC systems. Before attempting to troubleshoot, the precautions below must be observed. Failure to do so can result in burned out alternator diodes and vehicle wiring.
- a. When installing a battery, always make sure the battery polarity and ground polarity of the alternator are the same. If a battery polarity is wrong or if the battery is reversed when installing it, the battery is directly shorted through the diodes. The diodes and vehicle wiring are endangered by high current flow and may burn "open".
 - b. When connecting a booster or slave battery, make certain to connect the negative battery posts together and the positive battery posts together or the same damage as above may result.
 - c. When connecting a charger to the battery, connect the positive lead to the battery positive post and the negative lead to the battery negative post or the same damage as above may result.
 - d. Never operate the alternator on open circuit. With no battery or electrical load in the circuit, the alternator can build up high voltage which may damage the diodes and be extremely dangerous to anyone who might accidentally touch the alternator "battery" terminal.
 - e. Do not short across or ground any of the terminals on the alternator or voltage regulator. Any grounding on purpose or shorting can cause serious electrical malfunction and endanger components of the electrical system.
 - f. Do not attempt to "polarize" the alternator. Unlike the DC generator, its polarity cannot be lost. An attempt to "polarize" can be of no value and might cause damage to the diodes or wiring. If there is any doubt as to the polarity of an alternator, refer to its specifications or connect a battery to the field circuit only, rotate the rotor slowly in either direction, and note the polarity of the voltage as measured by a voltmeter between the alternator insulated terminal and the alternator ground terminal.

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3.2.4.1 Charge Too High (Overcharged Battery): Overcharge is indicated by excessive water usage. In extreme overcharge, the water level may drop far below the top of the plates. Since only the portion of the plates covered with electrolyte is useful in developing voltage, the battery may not have sufficient capacity to crank the engine. Normal water consumption is 1 oz/100 h (29.6 cc/100 h) of operation. Also hot weather operation might slightly increase the water consumption. A high system voltage may damage voltage sensitive accessories such as light bulbs. To correct a high system voltage and overcharged battery, which shortens battery life, the system voltage must be lowered by adjustment of the voltage regulator.

- a. Check the battery condition—fill to proper level with water. Then apply the light load test (3.1.6.1.2) to determine if there is a shorted cell. Batteries with internal short circuits will accept a high charge rate and use water excessively. If a cell is shorted, replace with a good battery. Check for improved charging performance (decreased battery water usage) over a reasonable service period.
- b. If battery was not the source of trouble, check the condition of the wiring. Visually inspect for damage or loose connections. Then check for improved battery charging performance (decreased battery water usage) over a reasonable service period after making repair of wiring system.
- c. If neither the battery or the wiring is the source of trouble, check the regulator. Place a voltmeter across the battery. Start the engine and run at 1500 to 1700 rpm. Note the voltmeter reading. If the reading is 16.0 V or above, the voltage regulator setting is too high. Adjust regulator according to instructions below:
 - (1) Remove lead from “V” terminal of the three-unit regulators (note this lead is “hot” from the battery, do not permit it to touch ground), or remove wiring connector body from one-unit or two-unit regulators. Remove regulator cover. Reconnect wire or wiring connector to regulator and note voltmeter reading. This reading will differ from that first noted with regular cover on. Adjust regulator by turning adjusting screw counterclockwise to decrease voltage setting. Reduce voltage to 14.5 to 15.0 V range. If no adjustment is possible, replace regulator.
 - (2) If the voltage reading in 3.2.4.1 (c) was less than 16.0 V, the type of use by the engine or vehicle is probably always at high rpm and the regulator setting should be lowered. For this minor adjustment, allow the engine to run 15 min to stabilize the regulator setting. Then follow the same procedure as (1) above but adjust regulator voltage lower by 0.3 V only. This should bring the regulator within the 13.1 to 15.0 V range.
 - (3) After regulator setting has been adjusted, remove the lead from “V” terminal. Replace regulator cover. Reconnect wiring to regulator and note voltmeter reading. (Should be between 13.1 to 15.0 V.)
 - (4) Remove test voltmeter and check battery for improved charging performance (decrease water usage) over a reasonable service period. Repeat adjustment (2) above if necessary to lower regulator adjustment further.

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3.2.4.2 Charge Too Low (Undercharged Battery): Undercharge is indicated by discharged or “run down” battery condition.

- a. Check fan belt condition and tension. Tighten, if required, according to manufacturer’s recommendation.
- b. Check battery condition. A chronic undercharged battery should be checked with the light load test (3.1.6.1.2) to determine if battery is at fault. Replace with a good battery if required and check for improved performance over a reasonable service period.
- c. Many discharged batteries are caused by a vehicle operator leaving the accessories “on” for an extended period without chance for recharge. This is not the fault of the battery or the charging system.
- d. If none of the above are found to be at fault, check charging system wiring. Visually inspect wiring. Clean and tighten connections. Repair or replace as needed.
- e. Check alternator output. First disconnect the battery ground strap. Then connect a service ammeter in the circuit as the “BAT” terminal of the alternator and a voltmeter from “BAT” terminal of the alternator to ground. Connect a jumper from “F” terminal to “BAT” terminal. Reconnect battery ground strap, turn lights on high beam and heater blower motor on high speed. Operate engine at 1500 to 2000 rpm as required to obtain maximum current output. If ampere output is within 10% of rated output on nameplate, the alternator is good. Turn lights and heater blower off, stop engine, remove jumper lead, and remove instrumentation.
- f. Check the voltage regulator setting. Place a voltmeter across the battery. Start the engine and run at 1500 to 1700 rpm. Turn on lights to add a 15 to 25 A loading. Note the voltmeter reading. If reading is below 13.1 V, adjust as described in 3.2.4.1(c1) by turning adjusting screw clockwise to increase voltage to 14.5 to 15.0 V range. Remove voltmeter and check battery for improved charging performance over a reasonable service period.

3.3 Ignition System (Gasoline Engine Installation):

This system includes the distributor, ignition resistor, ignition switch, spark plugs, wiring, and battery. These units work together as a team to ignite the air-fuel mixture within the cylinders at the proper time. The components of the ignition system function together in two electrical circuits, the primary and secondary circuits.

3.3.1 Distributor: The distributor has a dual role in the ignition system. It must control the primary circuit by opening and closing it at the proper time and it must also distribute the high voltage in the secondary circuit to the proper spark plug.

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- 3.3.1.1 Primary Circuit: The battery, coil, contact points, condenser, switch, and wiring make up the primary circuit. The distributor cam, contact points, condenser, and wiring work together in opening and closing the primary circuit. This supplies the electric impulse to the ignition coil which produces a high voltage surge to meet the spark requirements. Since the distributor is mechanically driven by the engine, the position of the distributor in the engine determines the initial timing of the spark. After the coil produces the high voltage surge, the ignition system distributes the voltage to the correct plug at the correct instant. The correct instant depends on engine speed and intake manifold conditions.
- 3.3.1.2 Secondary Circuit: The coil, distributor cap and rotor, spark plugs, and wiring make up the high voltage side or secondary circuit. The high voltage surge developed in the coil is applied through a wire to the center tower of the distributor cap. It is then impressed on the rotor where it is distributed to each of the towers connected to the spark plug leads. Each plug is fired once during each revolution of the distributor.
- 3.3.1.3 Distributor Timing: At engine idle, the spark is timed to fire the plug just before the piston reaches its top dead-center position. Burning time of the air-fuel mixture is approximately 0.003 s. Burning must take place before the piston travels 10 to 20° past top dead-center in order to obtain full power from the explosion. Since the burn time is fixed and the position of the piston at completion of burn is fixed, it is necessary to fire the plug earlier as the engine speed increases. To obtain this spark advance as required by engine speed, most distributors have a centrifugal advance mechanism. This consists of two weights which throw out against spring tension to advance the breaker cam as the engine speed increases. The timing, consequently, varies from no spark advance at idle to full advance at high engine speed at which time the weights of the centrifugal advance mechanism reach the full extent of their travel.

Under part throttle operation, a high vacuum is created in the intake manifold. Accordingly, the air-fuel mixture taken into the cylinder is not so highly compressed as during full throttle and so burns at a slower rate. When this condition exists, an additional spark advance will increase fuel economy. So, on many applications where part throttle operation predominates, a vacuum advance mechanism is used in conjunction with centrifugal advance. This provides additional spark advance required for increased economy.

- 3.3.1.4 Distributor Service: There are a number of components which require periodic service. Although, there are many types of distributors, they are all the same in basic parts and servicing requirements.

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3.3.1.4.1 Distributor contact points normally provide many hundred hours of service. Points will develop a rough surface of transfer of material. Rough contact points become grayish in color and often provide a greater contact area than new contacts and will function until most of the tungsten is worn off. "Pitted contacts" is a normal condition and points should not be replaced unless the transfer has exceeded 0.020 in. Burned contact points should be replaced.

- (1) Clean the points with a few strokes of a clean, oil-free, fine cut "contact" file. Don't remove all roughness, merely remove scale and dirt. Never use emery cloth or sand paper. The abrasive particles will embed in the contact point surface and cause rapid burning. Contact point burning will result from high voltage, presence of oil or other foreign material, a defective condenser, or improper point adjustment.
- (2) High voltage causes a very high current flow through the contact points which produces sufficient heat to burn them. High voltage can result from an improperly adjusted voltage regulator or inoperative regulator or from a shorted bypass resistor.
- (3) Oil or crankcase vapors which work up through the distributor and deposit on the point surfaces will result in rapid point burning. It is easy to detect, since oil produces a smudgy line under contact points. Check for a clogged engine breather pipe which builds crankcase pressure to force oil vapors into the distributor. Over oiling the distributor will also produce this condition.
- (4) If the contact point opening is too small, the points will burn because they are closed too long a part of the operating time. Average current flow through the points will be too high causing rapid burning. Also excessive arcing will occur between the points causing low secondary voltage and engine miss.
- (5) A high series resistance in the condenser will cause the contact points to arc and burn rapidly. This resistance could be a loose condenser mounting or lead connection, or by a defect in the condenser.
- (6) There are many engine applications and environments, so it is impossible to suggest a length of point life. If the engine lacks power, or misses during acceleration or underload, this could indicate the contact points need replacement.

3.3.1.4.2 Distributor Condenser: A condenser can be tested for (a) insulation breakdown test; (b) series resistance; (c) capacity (MFD) on a reliable tester. Normally a check by test or replacement of the inexpensive condenser at time of contact point replacement is recommended.

3.3.1.4.3 Distributor Cap: Inspect the cap each time the contact points are changed or inspected. Always wipe the cap with a clean cloth, then inspect for chips, cracks, or carbonized paths which indicate high voltage leakage to ground. Loose leads in the cap towers cause gaps and high resistance; the resulting heat and arcing cause erosion which is an easy path for leakage. The tower inserts should be clean and free of corrosion. The rotor button should be checked for excessive wear. Any defect as mentioned above requires replacement of the cap.

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3.3.1.4.4 Distributor Rotor: Wipe rotor with a clean cloth whenever distributor is inspected. Check for chips, cracks, etc. The metal rotor tip should be checked for burning. Scrape it clean. Check the spring on the rotor for sufficient tension.

3.3.1.4.5 Distributor Lubrication: Many distributors have permanently lubricated bushings which need no attention until major engine overhaul. Distributors with oil reservoir tubes should be filled with lightweight engine oil. Add oil until oil stands in bottom of reservoir. For distributors with grease cup fittings, the cup should be filled with No. 2 1/2 grease then replaced and tightened one or two turns. Do not over lubricate distributor's bushings.

Whenever new contact points are installed, place a few drops of light oil on wick in the shaft under the rotor, if a wick is present. Also breaker plates, vacuum pivot arm posts, and contact point pivot arm require a few drops of light oil to insure free movement. Do not over oil. The breaker cam should be lightly wiped with a film of high temperature grease.

3.3.2 Ignition Coil: Pulse transformer that steps up the lower battery or generator voltage to the high voltage necessary to ignite the air-fuel mixture at the gaps of the spark plugs. It contains three basic parts: (a) a primary winding consisting of a few hundred turns of heavy wire; (b) a secondary winding consisting of many thousand turns of very fine wire; (c) a laminated soft iron core which serves to concentrate the magnetic field. The primary winding is outside of the secondary winding, the laminated iron provides both a core and outside shell around both windings. These three parts are placed in a coil case and immersed in oil. The coil cap, with its attachments to the windings, completes the entire coil.

3.3.2.1 How the Ignition Coil Works: When the distributor contact points are closed, the circuit is energized and a magnetic field is built up around both coils. When the points are opened, the circuit is de-energized and the magnetic field collapses about the coils and induces a voltage in both. The voltage developed in the primary winding (about 250 V) is absorbed and dissipated by the distributor condenser. The voltage developed in the secondary winding (about 25 000 V) is distributed to the spark plugs for igniting the air-fuel mixture within the cylinders.

3.3.2.2 Ignition Coil Service: Ignition coils normally require no service. At time the distributor contact points are replaced, the coil should be inspected:

- (1) Check top for cracks or carbon tracks which indicate current leakage. Clean with solvent or a clean rag.
- (2) Check the wire in the tower to be sure it is tight and rubber boot is effectively keeping out moisture and dirt. The small wires of the primary circuit should be clean and tight.
- (3) The primary terminals of the coil must be connected properly. With a negative grounded electrical system, the distributor primary lead should be connected to the (-) ignition coil terminal. With a positive grounded system, the distributor primary lead should be connected to the positive (+) ignition coil terminal.

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- 3.3.3 Ignition Resistor: This is electrically part of the coil design and permits maximum life of contact points and coil. It is connected in series with the primary circuit between the battery and coil. Most ignition resistors are an integral part of wiring (the resistance of the wire is “built in” and calibrated to a predetermined value). Some are wire wound in a ceramic block with terminals at both ends for connection. To obtain greatly improved starting performance at low temperatures, the resistance is bypassed during cranking. This connects the ignition coil directly to the battery, making full battery voltage available to the coil which keeps ignition voltage as high as possible during cranking, when the battery voltage decreases under the load of cranking. There is no service necessary to the ignition resistor.
- 3.3.4 Ignition Switch: The ignition switch connects or disconnects the ignition circuit from the battery or generator. It is in series with the primary circuit. Any resistance on switch terminals or within the switch will adversely affect the ignition system. No periodic service is necessary.
- 3.3.5 Spark Plugs: A spark plug consists of two electrodes separated from each other by a specific gap. The side electrode is part of the threaded shell grounded to the engine block, the center electrode is completely insulated from the shell by ceramic. The high voltage from the ignition coil causes a spark to jump the gap to the side electrode. This spark, inside the cylinder, ignites the air-fuel mixture for combustion in the cylinder.
- 3.3.5.1 Spark Plug Gap Spacing: The gap between electrodes is critical. Each engine manufacturer specifies the correct gap for efficient operation in that engine. The gap varies between 0.022 to 0.044 in (.112 cm). The correct spacing affects the entire range of performance of the engine—starting, idling, accelerating, power, and top speed. Uniform spark plug gap is essential for a smooth running engine.
- 3.3.5.2 “Hot” and “Cold” Spark Plugs: Spark plugs must operate in a certain temperature range to give top performance. The ability of a spark plug to conduct heat away from the center electrode and its insulating material is controlled by the design of the shell and insulator. Heat must escape through the insulating material, shell, gasket, and threads to the cylinder head and engine coolant. Manufacturers can vary the construction of the insulator and vary the heat dissipating characteristics. There are a number of plugs in any size to permit selecting one with the correct heat range characteristics for the engine operating conditions. Charts from spark plug manufacturers show the plugs recommended for each engine.

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3.3.5.2.1 Spark Plug Service: Examination of a used spark plug usually reveals if the correct heat range is used for the type of engine operation. If the plug is too “hot”, the insulator will blister or crack and the electrodes will burn rapidly. If the plug is too “cold”, soot and carbon will deposit on the insulator causing fouling and missing.

- (1) Spark plug electrodes will erode eventually. Fuel additives tend to form rusty brown oxide deposits on the insulator and center electrode tip. Plugs should be cleaned regularly every 300 h of engine operation. File the center electrode to renew sharp corners and reset gap to specifications. Replace spark plugs when electrodes are worn to where it is impossible to re-adjust proper gap and still maintain a “square relationship” between electrodes. Use a new gasket seat each time a plug is installed. The spark plug should be screwed into cylinder head only sufficiently tight to compress gasket. Torque specifications are issued by all plug manufacturers.

3.3.6 Ignition System Wiring: The wiring circuits are just as important as the electrical units themselves. Loose connections, frayed wire, or bad insulation can cause poor or no ignition performance. High resistance in the primary wiring can cause low voltage in the secondary (high voltage) system. Poor insulation on the high voltage secondary circuit can permit current loss and prevent spark plug firing.

3.3.6.1 Radio Suppression: Ignition systems, during normal operation, produce high frequency electric signals that could interfere with the vehicle radio or nearby television reception. Practically all ignition systems now incorporate some form of resistance or suppression to eliminate this undesirable interference. One of the most common methods of suppression is the use of secondary “ignition suppresser cable” called TVRS cable. This type cable requires understanding and use of good service procedures so as not to damage the cable and create high resistance between the cable and its terminal connections.

3.3.6.2 Protection of Wiring Circuit: Wiring systems (except the secondary circuit) are protected from short circuit failure by adequate protection devices, i.e., fuses or insulating materials that will insure that a failure will be confined to the affected circuit and not cause a failure in adjacent circuits.

3.4 Cranking Motor:

A cranking motor consists chiefly of an armature, a field frame, a drive mechanism, and in some cases a solenoid. It is designed and built to provide long periods of service in gasoline, diesel, and turbine engine applications.

3.4.1 Frame and Field Assembly: This consists of field coil windings assembled over iron pole pieces which are attached to the inside of a heavy iron frame. The iron frame and pole shoes not only provide a place where the field coils can be mounted but provide a low resistance path for the magnetic flux produced by the field coil windings. The polarity around the field frame alternates—north, south, north, south.

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3.4.1 (Continued):

There are two types of field coils used in cranking motors: series and shunt. The current that flows through series coils also flows through the armature windings, but current through a shunt coil bypasses the armature and flows directly back to the battery. The shunt coil can be easily identified by its direct connection to ground. The series coils contain several turns of heavy copper ribbon conductor while shunt coils contain comparatively more turns of smaller wire.

In cranking motor with series coils (all field coils in series with the armature) the speed of the armature is inversely proportional to the magnetic flux. In other words, the lower the magnetic flux, the higher the speed. So when a battery is connected to a series motor that is allowed to free speed (no load connected to the armature), the increasing speed of the armature causes the magnetic flux to decrease which in turn causes the armature speed to increase even further. Finally a maximum free speed is reached which may be high enough to cause the armature windings to be thrown from their slots. So some means must be provided to protect the armature of a series cranking motor. A shunt coil (field windings bypass the armature and flow current directly to ground) has a constant value of magnetic flux as determined by battery voltage always present in the motor, and the maximum free speed is accordingly limited.

3.4.2 Armature Assembly: This assembly consists of a stack of iron laminations located over a steel shaft, a commutator assembly, and the armature windings. The windings are heavy copper ribbons that are assembled into slots in the iron laminations. The winding ends are soldered or welded to the commutator bars which are electrically insulated from each other and from the iron shaft. There are two major types of armature windings: lap and wave. The lap winding has as many paths as poles, and the wave winding always has only two paths. A lap winding is normally used where a low resistance armature is needed.

In the lap winding (used in a 2-pole motor), the lead ends of a winding element, or complete turn of a conductor, are connected to adjacent commutator bars. With a battery connected to the brushes, the direction of current flow under the north pole is the same in all conductors, and the direction of current flow under the south pole is the same in all conductors. This arrangement provides maximum torque.

In the wave winding (used on a 4-pole motor), the lead ends are connected to commutator bars that are approximately 180° (3.14 rad) apart. As in the lap winding, the current flow directions in conductors under the same pole are the same to provide maximum torque.

The armature is supported on the shaft ends by bushings in end frames that are assembled onto the frame and field assembly. With brushes that are supported on the frame and field assembly riding on the commutator bars, the cranking motor assembly is formed.

Many cranking motors have a long pole shoe tip which is assembled in the direction of armature rotation. This feature permits the retention of brushes in the same location for motors of clockwise or counterclockwise rotation.

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3.4.3 Motor Drives: The motor drive mechanism is assembled onto the armature shaft. This is the means of transmitting power from the rotating armature to the engine during the starting cycle. All drives, regardless of type, contain a pinion which is made to move along the shaft and engage the engine ring gear for cranking purposes. A gear reduction, usually 15 to 1, is provided between pinion and ring gear. The electrical design of the motor is selected to utilize this ratio to turn the engine at speeds sufficient for starting purposes. After the engine has started, the ring gear would drive the armature at excessive speeds, so all drive mechanisms are designed to disengage the pinion or to provide an overrun feature to protect the armature from damaging speeds.

3.4.3.1 Bendix Drive: These operate on the principle of inertia to cause the pinion to engage the engine ring gear when the cranking motor is energized. The drive pinion is unbalanced by a counterweight on one side, and has screw threads cut in its inner bore. These screw threads match threads in the outer surface of the Bendix sleeve which fits loosely over the armature shaft. The pinion/sleeve assembly is connected to the drive head by a drive spring. When the armature starts to revolve, the rotation is transmitted through the drive head and spring to the sleeve. The pinion, being unbalanced and fitting loosely on the shaft, does not increase in speed with the armature due to its inertia. The result is that the spiral splined sleeve rotates within the pinion and the pinion moves endwise along the shaft to engage the ring gear. When the pinion reaches its stop on the sleeve, the teeth are engaged in the ring gear of the engine with the initial shock being taken up by the spring.

When the engine starts, the pinion is driven faster than the armature which causes the pinion to rotate in the same direction as the sleeve but at higher speed and the pinion is driven back out of mesh with the ring gear teeth. As long as the operator keeps the cranking motor energized with the engine running, the motor free speeds, so the starter switch should be released immediately. If a tooth abutment should occur during engagement, the spring compresses to allow the pinion to engage the next ring gear tooth.

A folo-thru Bendix drive contains a pinion and barrel assembly shrouding a spring-loaded detent pin that moves into a notch cut in the spiral spline which serves to lock the pinion in the cranking position. This feature prevents unwanted disengagement during false starts. When the engine starts, centrifugal force causes the detent pin to move out of the notch, and the pinion then is driven out of mesh with the ring gear. A second feature of the folo-thru drive is a sleeve or screwshaft having two pieces that are connected by a dentil clutch, or mating ratchet teeth. This prevents the armature from being driven at excessive speeds by the engine by allowing the pinion and the mating sleeve to overrun the ratchet teeth until the detent pin has disengaged the notch.

Another Bendix drive is the friction-clutch type used on larger cranking motors. This drive uses, instead of the drive spring, a series of flat spring-loaded clutch plates inside a housing that slip momentarily during engagement to relieve shock. A "meshing spring" is located inside the drive to allow the pinion to clear a tooth abutment condition. Otherwise this drive operates in the same manner as the other Bendix drives.

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3.4.3.2 Dyer Drive: In this motor drive, the pinion is moved into mesh with the engine ring gear by a shift lever that is solenoid operated. This type of drive is used on large cranking motors for very large engines and features positive engagement of the pinion with the ring gear before the switch can be closed between the battery and motor. This avoids spinning meshing which might be damaging on high horsepower cranking motors with rapid armature acceleration.

A small pinion spring allows easy engagement with the ring gear. Then as the armature rotates, the shift sleeve backs up to the "at rest" position. As the engine starts, the pinion overcomes the light pinion spring pressure and the pinion backs out of the ring gear. Another cranking cycle cannot be started without first de-energizing the solenoid moving the shift lever.

3.4.3.3 Roll Clutch Drive: This device is also moved by a solenoid, but has a shell and sleeve assembly that is splined to match splines on the armature shaft. The pinion is located on the inside of the shell along with spring-loaded rollers that are wedged against the pinion and a taper cut inside the shell. When the shift lever is operated to push the pinion into mesh and to close the switch to start armature rotation, cranking begins with torque being transmitted from the splined shell to the pinion by the 4 rolls which become wedged tightly between the pinion and the taper cut into the shell. When the engine starts, it drives the pinion faster than armature rotation and the 4 rolls are moved away from the taper allowing the pinion to overrun the shell. Releasing the start switch moves the shift lever back by return spring action.

3.4.3.4 Sprag Clutch Drive: This is similar to the roll clutch drive except that a series of sprags, usually 30 in number, replace the 4 rolls between the shell and the sleeve. These sprags are held against the shell and sleeve surfaces by a garter spring. The shell and sleeve assembly is splined to the armature shaft, and the pinion is spiral splined to the sleeve with a stop collar on the end. As the shift lever moves by solenoid action against the collar, it causes the entire clutch assembly to move along the splined shaft engaging the pinion in the engine ring gear. When the switch energizes the cranking motor, torque is transmitted from the shell to the sleeve and pinion through the sprags which tilt slightly and are wedged between the shell and sleeve. When the engine starts, the pinion and sleeve run faster than the armature and the sprags tilt in the opposite direction to allow the pinion and sleeve to overrun the shell and armature. Like all lever actuated drives, this is used only on larger cranking motors.

3.4.4 Magnetic Switches and Solenoids: A magnetic switch operates electromagnetically to open and close the circuit between the battery and the cranking motor. A solenoid performs two functions in the cranking circuit; it closes the circuit between the battery and motor, and also the solenoid plunger shifts the motor drive mechanism into mesh with the engine ring gear.

3.4.4.1 Magnetic Switches: These consist basically of a wire winding mounted in a hollow cylinder containing a moveable core or plunger with a contact disc assembled on the plunger. When the winding is energized, plunger movement causes the contact disc to be held tightly against two main switch terminals and closing the circuit between the two terminals. When the winding is de-energized, a return spring causes the plunger to return to its original position.

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3.4.4.2 Solenoid Switches: These consist basically of two windings mounted around a hollow cylinder containing a moveable core or plunger. A shift lever is connected to the plunger and a pushrod with contact disc is assembled in line with the plunger but completely separate. When the windings are energized, the plunger core pulls the shift lever and engages the motor drive with the ring gear. The contact disc is pushed into firm contact with the solenoid battery and motor terminals to start cranking. The two windings in the solenoid are called "hold-in" and "pull-in" windings. The "hold-in" winding contains many turns of fine wire and the "pull-in" winding contains the same number of turns of larger wire. When the start switch is closed, current flows to both windings simultaneously. The magnetism created by each winding adds together to form a strong magnetic field that attracts the plunger into the core to shift the motor drive. Once the shift movement is completed, much less magnetism is needed to hold the plunger. With the contact disc contacting both the solenoid battery and motor terminals, the "pull-in" winding is shorted and current stops flowing through it. This design reduces the current draw on the battery and reduces the amount of heat created in the solenoid switch. When the start switch is opened, current flows, for a brief instant through the contact disc to the solenoid motor terminal through the "pull-in" winding in reverse direction, and then through the "hold-in" winding in a normal direction. The opposing magnetisms created by each opposing winding cancel each other, and the return spring moves the shift mechanism back to the "at rest" position. All solenoid switches operate on the above basic principal.

Another feature on some models adds a contact finger which touches the contact disc in the cranking mode. This contact finger makes contact directly to the ignition coil, bypassing the ignition resistor, and provides more available ignition voltage during cranking.

3.4.5 Basic Circuits: There are two basic types of cranking motor circuits. The first involves a motor with Bendix drive that relies on inertia to move the pinion into mesh with the ring gear. The second uses a motor with drive mechanisms requiring a shift lever to move the pinion. A magnetic switch is used with the Bendix drive motor to provide a circuit of short length and low resistance between the battery and motor because the motor may draw over 100 A during operation. This takes heavy, short length cables to reduce the voltage drop. The magnetic switch then is in close proximity to the battery and motor, and small longer leads connect the coil to the start switch.

The second basic circuit is with the solenoid switch to shift the pinion as well as operate the cranking motor so this switch is always located right on the motor body, but the size of lead between battery and motor must be as short as possible.

A neutral safety switch is generally used to close only when the transmission shift lever is in the proper "neutral" or "park" position thereby preventing cranking of the engine with the shift lever in a gear.