

The Preventive Maintenance Series

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Spring Maintenance

With the 2017 classic/collector car event season well underway, the following Corvair items might be good to check.

Oil Filter Mounting Torque: The original Corvair oil filter specifications called for 20 ft-lbs.; it is definitely not a “spin-on” or “tighten $\frac{3}{4}$ turn after contacting gasket” type of design. Whether you changed it last or somebody else did, this is a quick check item with great importance. Of additional concern is the fact that the fiber gasket will shrink over time and the original torque lost. Get out your wrench and follow up after winter storage.

Mechanical Fuel Pump Cover Screws and Mount Screw: After decades of dealing with replacement fuel pumps I have come to the conclusion that it is not physically possible to manufacture a Corvair fuel pump that works perfectly and does not leak. The latest pumps produced have a tendency to start leaking not long after installation and almost certainly after winter storage. Check the cover screws but remember they are in aluminum and will only take so much torque. Also check the mounting screw by grabbing the pump and trying to rock it back and forth.

Electric Fuel Pump Filter: Most electric fuel pumps have a small pre-filter to protect it. If you have an original fuel tank it would be wise to check this filter every spring before long trips. Even with a replacement tank checking the filter would probably be a good idea because of its size. It is easy to add a large see-through filter on an FC but with most car mountings space limits the filter size. And if you do have an original tank, check the bottom regularly.

Fan Belt: The Corvair belt design adds significant flexing to the fan belt, plus the higher operating temperature of the air cooled engine (particularly at shutdown) both contribute to the need to check the tension regularly. Installing a new belt almost always requires a tension adjustment the first time you are on a trip. And long winter storage somehow seems to loosen them up.

Carburetor Inlet Nuts: The 1” inlet nuts on the Rochester carburetors can loosen up during long storage (as well as in general service). Make sure they are tight and try to put a slight bend in the gas line that would try and tighten the nut instead of “spring loading” to loosen it.

Ignition Points: If you have the original style points system it is a good idea to check the contact surface for corrosion over the (humid) winter months. And follow up with a little lube on the rubbing block and a check of the dwell.

Brake Fluid: Aging hydraulic seals that are not used regularly can begin to seep or just plain leak. Master cylinders leak under the dash and behind the carpet and wheel cylinders can leak sight unseen until the reservoir is dry. Always keep the level ¼" below the lid and check everything if the level falls over the winter. And don't forget the "stomp test" if you have original steel lines or rubber hoses.

And Miscellaneous Stuff: If your car is stored where mice have access, you may have nests anywhere, but of particular concern is the top of the heads and cylinders. Also check tire pressures, add a bottle of Iso-Heat (red bottle) to the gas to catch any moisture that condensed in the tank over the winter, check all lights, clean battery cable connections and give your baby a good test run.