

THE PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE SERIES

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This month we look at storage problems. A lot of Corvair owners store cars, either indoors or outdoors. Having done this myself for many years, allow me to share my observations and solutions to typical problems that arise.

- ❑ Never store cars on gravel or dirt areas. The midwest humidity rises daily and is not blown out by the airflow from driving. Brake lines, suspension parts, tunnel pans and floors just go away. Car covers cause terminal mildew for the same reasons, they should be used indoors only for dust, insect and bird droppings, etc.
- ❑ Gasoline: Keep the tank full; there will be less surface area of the gas to evaporate or tank surface area to condense moisture. You may want to use a non-vented cap for storage (You must change to a vented cap when driving). Use a can of Heet (isopropyl alcohol only) to help eliminate moisture. The new gas additives do strange things as they age: you may have to replace accelerator pumps every time the car sits for over six months. Fuel stabilizers are available for long term storage.
- ❑ Ignition points: I find that even new points can oxidize and become insulated if the conditions are right. You should plan on replacing the points if the car is stored over six months. The ones that go bad will quit after only a few miles of seemingly perfect operation; in the middle of a parade for instance.
- ❑ Tires: Use higher pressure for storing, and depending on the quality of the tire, be prepared to balance them every other year if the car sits for long periods.
- ❑ Battery: I suggest you remove the battery and buy a cheap trickle charger. That keeps battery boxes clean and the battery much happier.
- ❑ Fuel Leaks: Always check carb fuel inlet nuts after long storage, and check the fittings at the fuel pump. Check fuel pump cover screws before and after the engine has warmed up. Filler neck hoses can shrink, check them after a fill up. Last and very important, check the bottom of your tank unless you have installed a new one recently. Pilot lights will attract gas vapor from even small leaks in tank bottoms.
- ❑ Powerglide transmission converters all leak down and overfill the pan. If your shifter cable or its seal leak, you will find a large puddle.
- ❑ Pack wheel bearings, fan, and idler bearings if you do not know their history. Storage causes the oil to evaporate from bearing surfaces, and ancient grease will not re-oil properly when you start driving again.
- ❑ Oil: Always store a car with clean oil, and shut down the engine only after a complete warm up. This helps eliminate acids formed from crankcase dilution or cylinder wall wash down from choke operation. You could put a squirt or two of oil in each spark plug hole and rotate the engine a couple of times if you are putting it away for a long time. A fresh grease job is also helpful to get dirt and water out of ball joints and tie rod ends.

If you have other good ideas, please share. It's your baby, so give it the love it deserves!