

The Preventive Maintenance Series

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Fuel Leaks: In no particular order since they are all dangerous, although some are more common than others due to old age or human error.

- Rochester carburetor inlet nuts – they work loose from engine vibration and the spring action of the steel lines. Try putting a backwards spring on the lines so that they attempt to tighten the nut instead of loosening it.
- Fuel pump outlet pipe – this short pipe thread part will loosen up in the pump and make the pump appear to leak.
- Fuel pump internal leaks – some old styles will leak into the oil. Usually a leak will show up at the small vent at the back of the pump. Some pump leaks will be intermittent; some leaking hot, others leaking cold.
- Never use rubber gas lines and add on fuel filters in the engine compartment – keeping fittings tight and rubber from deteriorating due to heat soak is a huge risk.
- The fuel inlet line as it passes through the front engine shroud can develop a leak from rubbing on the sharp sheet metal at the hole. GM issued a Service Bulletin on grommets that were slit or missing and that a fire could occur.
- The fuel tank can rust out from the inside and appear to be sound until the drips occur. This could be a big issue if you garage your car near pilot lights or if your furnace draws combustion air from the garage.
- Fuel tank hoses and seal. There are four possibilities: the large fuel filler neck hose, the vent hose, the sending unit seal and the outlet hose. The inlet hoses will leak only when the tank is full or during a hard right turn the others can leak anytime.
- The steel lines from the tank can rust, generally inside the tunnel pan where you cannot see them – rodent nests, dirt, etc, trap moisture.
- There is a rubber inlet line hose next to the starter, connecting the long steel line from the tank to the engine compartment steel line.
- If you fill your tank with cool underground fuel and then park your car in the sun or in a warm garage, the fuel will expand and you can lose almost a quart onto the garage floor or driveway.
- Repairing floor pans can lead to drilled holes or sheet metal screws into the tank. The tank is only 1/4" from the front sheet metal floor in the area that starts upward. The shelf in the trunk is another potential problem for screws or drilled holes. Again the tank is up against the sheet metal.