

Technical Notes

Use these simple steps to prepare your Full Classic[®] for night driving

By Paul Rydning

Most of us try not to drive our Full Classics[®] after dark, but there are times when we would like to enjoy an evening tour without the fear of someone hitting us, or worse yet, not seeing someone or something in front of us.

Let us look into some of the things we can do to help prevent these problems.

We can trace many of the problems with dim lighting, poor starting and poor battery charging back to that old gremlin voltage drop. Our Classics were for the most part equipped with 6 volt electrical systems.

When new and in excellent condition, these systems presented few problems, although difficulties with new cars were not unheard of. I will not go into the merits of 6 volts versus 12, but it is worth noting that a given level of resistance (ohms) will have a greater impact on a 6 volt system than on a 12 volt system.

So what are some of the areas that can give us problems.

Dim Stop/Tail Lights

First, most of us have had a problem with dim stop/tail lights. One of the first things to do is to clean the bulb and bulb sockets. Simply remove the bulb from the socket and clean both the bulb end and the socket with a wire brush. (Never use sandpaper as this can leave a residue which can actually make the connection worse and bulb dimmer).

Clean the reflector with soap and water and do the same for the lens. Check the connection of the tail lamp to the car body, and, if you can, run a return ground lead to the frame to provide a good return

path for the electricity to the battery.

Redo Reflectors

Second, for headlight systems, do the same as for the tail lights. In this case you may want to consider having the reflectors re-silvered to greatly improve the light output (assuming your Classic pre dates use of sealed beams.)

Headlight Relays

Third, after all the work covered above, you can think about installing new headlamp relays in all of your lighting circuits including headlights, tail

lights and stop lights. In my experience all of the light

switches used in our older cars are in only fair to poor condition and

are often the cause of poor lighting.

We probably cannot buy new units,

but with properly installed relays we can get

new performance from old equipment.

Halogens?

Finally, after doing all of the above, you may want to take advantage of the new halogen bulbs in your non-sealed beam headlamps. **Do not do this without installing relays and upgrading the wire size to at least #14 (or better yet #12) from the relay to the light if your current wire is undersized.**

With careful inspection and execution of this check list, you should have a bright future for your next night time tour.



Remember: Technical notes from past issues are posted on the Arizona Region web site at www.arizonaccra.com.