

Automotive Magneto FAQ

How is a Vertex Magneto turned on and off?

The terminal marked "P" is wired to a grounding switch. To run engine open the switch. To stop, close it. You can use your existing ignition switch by installing a Hunt relay switch.

Are special spark plugs needed?

Non-Resistor plugs are recommended which can be purchased from Hunt Magnetos, or your local speed shop.

What should the spark plugs be gapped at?

When running a magneto ignition it is not necessary to run a wide spark plug gap due to the longer duration of spark. We recommend that you set your plugs anywhere from 0.018" to 0.025" with the closer gaps being used for higher RPM applications.

Are special ignition wires required?

An ignition wire that has a stainless wire core is recommended for maximum performance. Carbon core wires can be run in lower performance applications so interference will not bother other electronic devices on the vehicle such as radios and on board computers.

Does a magneto require extra power to drive?

Yes, but only a small percentage. It has been shown on engine dynamometers that magnetos draw only one quarter of a horsepower at 10,000 rpm.

How often do the points need adjusting?

Under racing conditions it is recommended that the points be checked every three to five races. In less severe applications the points can be checked on a yearly basis.

How are the points adjusted on a vertex magneto?

With the use of a flat head screw driver and a set of feeler gauges the points can be adjusted by loosening the points screw and then re-tightening it until snug. Once the points are snugged down the flat head screw driver can be used to move the points until the desired loose 0.015" to tight 0.016" clearance is obtained. Once the points are set at the correct gap, tighten down the point screw and re-install the anti-track insulator and cap.

What is the life expectancy of the points in magneto?

The points in a magneto are composed of a platinum alloy that should last for years of service. If there is pitting on the points or oxidization from moisture, the points can be filed with a nail file until the surfaces are clean and make square contact with each other. If the points are worn or filed beyond the platinum alloy and down to the metal backing plate they must be replaced. It is possible to replace only one side of the points if the other still has some platinum on it.

Must the Magneto be lubricated?

The breaker cam should be inspected periodically to make sure that its surface is lightly lubricated. If dry, apply a dab of Bosch breaker cam grease to the cam wiper, or directly to the cam itself in applications that do not have a cam wiper.

What precautions should be taken when welding on a vehicle with a magneto?

It is recommended that the magneto be removed from the vehicle before welding. If this is not possible the next best alternative is to remove the grounding wire connected to the "P" terminal.

Is recharging the magneto necessary?

Yes, in racing applications it is recommended that the magneto be serviced every three years to be "tuned up" and recharged. For street driven applications this time can vary depending on usage, but every five to ten years is common. For those running "rare earth" equipped magnetos, recharging is not necessary, but the magneto should still be inspected on a regular basis.