

# Viton Tip Float Valve

by Tom Endy

For a number of years I have been fooling with Zenith carburetors and one thing I have discovered is not only the importance of a proper fuel float level, but also the need to have the float valve hold the proper level for an indefinite period of time.

Most original style float valves (original or reproduction) will not hold the float level indefinitely. They rely on the tank shut off valve for a positive shut off when parking the car, and most tank valves do not shut off 100%. The result is fuel dripping from the carburetor because the fuel level in the reservoir was able to rise due to the float valve not holding and it rose over the top of the main and cap jets and dripped out on the ground, or onto the garage floor.

A number of years ago the Model A Kingdom was introduced to the Viton tip float valve. The valve tip has a rubber-like material that will provide a positive 100% shut off and will hold the float level indefinitely. Most suppliers now carry them.

However, there is a quality problem with the manufacturing process of the Viton tip float valves on the market.

A number of years ago I bought my first Viton tip float valve from Bratton's Antique Auto, and it leaked like a sieve. It was easy enough to take it apart and I found it loaded with brass machining chips. Brass chips were even imbedded in the Viton tip rubber-like material. Once I cleaned all the brass chips out of the valve it worked perfectly.

I ordered several more valves from Bratton's and took them apart before I used them. These were also full of brass chips. I called and spoke to Walt Bratton. If you have ever done business with Walt you have probably discovered that he is very responsive. Suppliers like Walt are at the mercy of their suppliers. Walt contacted the supplier of the Viton tip float valves and explained the problem to them.

The next batch of Viton tip float valves I purchased from Bratton's showed a 90% improvement in

quality in that there were only a few brass chips inside the valve.

Since then I always take new Viton tip float valves apart and inspect them for brass chips with a jeweler's loop before installing them and when I find brass chips I clean them out.

The last batch I ordered from Walt had more than the normal amount of brass chips in the valve. There were also brass burrs hanging off the four holes ready to break off and drop into the reservoir. Once again I called Walt and advised him that his supplier had reverted back to square one.

One of the things I have learned about the Model A hobby is that the Hallmark of reproduction parts is not quality. The sad thing is that once a quality problem is identified and corrected, it does not always stay that way. Henry would have had a fit.

The moral to this story is that a Viton tip float valve from any supplier is something worthwhile installing in your Zenith. They probably all come from the same manufacturer regardless of which retail supplier you buy them from. Best to take it apart before you install it and clean out any brass chips you might find lurking inside.



**The valve comes apart by prying the small round washer at right out of a recess just inside the valve housing where the two holes are shown. There are actually four holes. A small jeweler's screwdriver works well. If the washer ever becomes deformed and restricts the valve it can be replaced with fine SS safety wire looped through the holes and twisted; one loop for each pair of holes.**