

The Correct Speed!

By Tom Endy

The speedometer is off:

If you have ever checked your speedometer against a road marker or on a Triple-A tread mill you might find that the old speedo reading on the dash is not quite accurate. The cause may be that you have the wrong speedo gear installed in the speedo housing on the torque tube. They come in three sizes, 17 teeth, 18 teeth, and 19 teeth. It is up to you to figure out which you are supposed to have. See Bratton's 2005 catalog, page 108.

An overdrive installed:

If you have a Mitchell, Ryan, Borg-Warner, or Volvo overdrive installed and you are picking up the reading at the output of the overdrive, it could still be incorrect. Of course if you are still hooked up to the front of the torque tube you will be way out of the ballpark every time you shift into overdrive.

A correction adapter:

Back in the old days when modern cars had mechanical speedometers there were speedometer shops in almost every town that could correct a speedometer. However, with today's advanced technology most have gone out of business. Back then you could take your car to the neighborhood speedo shop and they would calculate what the error percent of your speedometer was and for a nominal fee they would install an adapter box with the correct gear ratio to correct the error. The box was half the size of a pack of cigarettes and had a standard speedometer cable input and output connection. The box was usually installed under the car somewhere and was connected in series with the car's speedometer cable.

They are still available:

There is a company in Portland, OR that manufactures them and will assemble them according to the error factor they are provided with. You can obtain one from Bill Swigart, the fellow in Redding, CA who builds and markets Borg-Warner overdrives.

Bill Swigart:

There are two things you have to tell Bill when you order one. (1.) You have to know what your error factor is. For instance if the measured speed is 45 miles per hour and your speedometer is reading 52,

you need to give Bill that information. (2.) You have to tell Bill which type speedometer cable is installed in your car. There are two versions that connect to the speedometer housing on the torque tube. One version has a round end with a key. The other version has a square end. Henry made the change just to confuse and confound future generations of Model A Ford hobbyist. You will also find that Bill's fee is very reasonable.

Bill Swigart

9537 Peaceful Lane
Redding, CA 96003
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The 29 Coupe:

I obtained an adapter box from Bill for my 29 coupe. I have a Borg-Warner overdrive installed and even though I had the speedometer cable connected to the speedo output of the overdrive it was still way off. I told Bill what the error factor was and which speedometer cable I had and he supplied a box with the correct gear ratio. I connected it between the standard speedometer cable and the extension cable that reaches the distance to the overdrive. Bill also supplies extension cables in case you need one. ©