Testing the Model T Magneto

If your suspicious of the magneto conduct this test exactly as indicated and let us know the results.

John Regan’s simple magneto output test. *(See Diagram Below)*

Go to your local auto parts store and buy a #1156 bulb. This is commonly used as a back up light bulb in modern cars. This bulb will come close to simulating the load of a typical Model T coil. You may want to pick up a socket for it too and put some wires on it to make a regular test light out of it.

Connect the bulb across the magneto output and ground while you running the car on the battery with the emergency brake pulled all the way back and set. Using an **analog voltmeter** check the AC voltage across this bulb as a load.

Provide the following test results.

- AC Voltage reading at engine idle:
- Lamp Brightness at engine idle:
- AC Voltage reading at engine moderate speed:
- Lamp Brightness at engine moderate speed:
- AC Voltage reading at engine high speed:
- Lamp Brightness at engine high speed:

A good magneto will produce at least 7–8 volts AC across this load at a brisk idle. If your magneto output passes this test it has sufficient output to power coils.

Another test.

With the emergency brake pulled back and locked try prying the front crankshaft towards the back of the car. This will tell you if you have excessive crankshaft end play in the thrust surface. If you find more end play than normal pull the engine pan and with a magnetic dial indicator against the crankshaft (emergency brake all the way forward) move the crankshaft back and forth and measure the end play. If you have more than .020 you’re well on your way to a magnet to field ring collision.

Ron Patterson
Ron the Coilman

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**John Regan Magneto Voltage Test Circuit**

[Diagram of the test setup including a #1156 bulb, an AC voltage meter, and a ground connection.]