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Kim's Tips – Get it Taped!

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Author: Kim Henson

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Keep a roll or two of tape in your vehicle - it can come in very handy...

Says Kim Henson.

I have often been thankful for the various 'get you out of trouble' emergency aid things that I endeavour to keep in my car's boot, when I go on travel. I am not talking about a need (usually impractical) to carry huge tool kits, etc, but (usually) compact items that could just help you get home, or perhaps help out a fellow motorist, etc.

Today I am thinking especially about rolls of adhesive or sticky tape. Of course there are many varieties available, and particularly useful in automotive situations are waterproof



insulating tape, multi-use strong 'repair' tape and masking tape. In addition there are specialist tapes developed specifically for effecting temporary repairs respectively to coolant hoses, exhaust systems, and so on.

Many is the time that insulating tape has proved to be useful to me for electrical fixes (including sorting out, at the roadside, an electrical wiring 'burnout' encountered by a fellow classic car owner), and on one occasion some hose repair tape enabled me to help another driver stem the flow of coolant from an ailing top hose. However, the other day a length of humble masking tape (primarily intended for masking car paintwork during spray painting operations - but useful for many 'temporary' fixes too) came to the rescue.

The situation was this: The owner of a petrol-engined car in which the spark plugs are buried deep within wells within the cylinder head, had, due to excessive condensation accumulating within the engine bay during a long period of inactivity for the vehicle, inadvertently flooded the engine with petrol when trying to start it. This was not helped by the electrical fuel pump continuing to pump petrol into the engine during cranking attempts...

The solution was to remove the spark plugs, dry off the neat fuel from their electrodes and re-fit them. Fortunately a new spark plug socket spanner of the correct size and type was available, and enabled the plugs to be withdrawn from the engine, so that they could be dried out and warmed up. However, the car's owner discovered that on re-fitting the plugs, when trying to detach the plug spanner from each spark plug, his 3/8 inch square drive socket driver bar (admittedly with a well-worn locking ball at its lower end), kept on repeatedly detaching itself from the plug socket spanner, which stubbornly remained attached to the spark plug, buried out of reach deep within the well...

My own car and tool kit were not to hand at the time, and only limited resources were available at the location where we were working. So, after repeated and unsuccessful efforts with the socket driver bar (and another one), long-nosed pliers, etc, the owner was on the point of calling a rescue service. However, I suggested trying the roll of masking tape that



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was all we had available at the time. I wrapped a short length of the tape tightly around the square driver bar and the plug socket spanner, and hey presto, after each plug in turn was installed and fully tightened, the socket bar and socket were removed 'as one' from the plug, quickly and easily as the bar and socket were held together by the tape.

The car then started straight away and the owner was on his way.

So let's hear it for the humble but oh-so-useful sticky tape, which saved the day!