



## Where's That Smoke: Is It Right For You?

October 9th is Fire Prevention Day. While most people have a fire plan for their home, it is also critical to have a plan for your Volkswagen. Mid America Motorworks has compiled some tips and reminders to keep you safe if disaster strikes.

### Fire Safety

According to the National Fire Protection Association, the most common cause of vehicle fires is a mechanical or electrical issue. Cars can also catch fire because of a bad accident. If you see smoke or flames coming from a Air Cooled VW, or smell burning rubber or plastic, respond immediately.

### Prevent A Volkswagen Fire

Preparation is key! Follow these guidelines to avoid trouble:

- Have your VW serviced regularly by a professionally trained mechanic. If there's a mechanic in your area who specializes in classics, even better! Stay on top of leaks and other potential problem areas for Air Cooled VWs. A well-maintained car is less likely to have a fire.
- Gas cans and propane cylinders should never be transported in the passenger compartment.
- If you must transport gasoline, transport only a small amount in a certified gas can that is sealed. Keep a window open for ventilation.
- Never park a car where flammables, such as grass, are touching the exhaust system.
- Drive safely to avoid an accident.
- Keep fire safety devices handy. A small fire extinguisher can easily fit into your VW. There are even extinguishers specifically designed for one-time, automotive use. Be aware of the expiration date on your extinguisher.





Due to its design, the air cooled engine is more prone to fires than many other cars on the road. There are a number of factors involved with an engine fire. Lets start with the basics.

A hot engine is the perfect environment for a fire, and when you get ANY flammable material on this hot engine, you can have a fire. The biggest cause of flammable materials getting on your VW engine is from old, rotten fuel lines or fuel lines that have rubbed against a sharp edge. The next cause of fires is a leaky carburetor.

### Fuel Lines

Checking and regularly replacing old fuel lines will do wonders to keep your VW from turning into a lightning Bug. Here are the best places to start:

- Fuel line under the gas tank
- Fuel line exiting from the frame horn next to the transmission
- Fuel line going to the fuel pump
- Fuel line between the fuel pump and carburetor

Always use the correct size of hose clamps at every single joint. You will want to make sure you get METRIC fuel lines, as having the incorrect hose is one of the biggest causes of VW fires. **DO NOT** use standard hoses.

Proper carburetor fittings are also key to avoiding a fire. If you do not tighten your carburetor fittings correctly, a huge amount of gasoline will leak onto your engine, creating a serious hazard.

Another important area to check is your Firewall Tin Cover! Make sure there is a rubber grommet in the hole in firewall tin cover where the line goes through. A missing grommet is a definite cause of Volkswagen fires! The fuel line rubs against the sharp edge of the tin and presto - you have a sieve pouring gas directly over the #3 exhaust pipe. Inspect this grommet and section of fuel line regularly!

### In Case of Fire

In the event that your Air Cooled VW does catch fire, try to keep calm and follow these tips:

- Pull over as quickly as it is safe to do so. Be sure to use your signal as you make your way to a safe location off the road.
- Once you have stopped, **TURN OFF** the engine.
- Get everyone out of the car. **NEVER** return to a burning car for any reason.
- Move everyone at least 100 feet from the burning car and well away from traffic.
- Call 9-1-1

Regular maintenance and a few easy steps are all you need to keep your Air Cooled VW safe!

