

Techo Tips - Priming the Oil Pump

If immediately after an oil change either the oil pressure gauge reads little or no pressure, or should the low pressure light stay on for more than 10 seconds from engine start up, chances are the oil pump needs priming.

Although not a common occurrence, it is very possible for the oil pump to lose its prime during an oil change. What happens is this:

- The used motor oil is drained from the engine and may also drain from the oil pump pick-up tube and the pump itself
- The new oil is added and the pump's pick-up tube is again submerged trapping air in the tube on the suction side of the pump
- The trapped air causes cavitation of the oil pump and prevents it from producing oil flow and therefore oil pressure.

Many installers tend to assume that the new oil filter is faulty. Upon removing it to install another, the trapped air is sometimes released and the problem is solved. The first filter was not faulty and there is a quick and simple way to fix this problem without wasting both time and filters:

1. Stop the engine
2. Loosen the oil filter until the sealing gasket barely touches the filter-mounting base
3. Disable the ignition system so the engine will not start
4. Turn the engine over on the starter motor until oil appears at the sealing gasket

DO NOT CRANK THE ENGINE FOR MORE THAN 20 SECONDS. After oil appears at the gasket, tighten the filter and wipe off the excess oil

5. Start the engine. Oil pressure should return to normal within 10 seconds.

If this procedure fails then:

1. Remove the filter
2. Using an oil squirt can filled with clean motor oil, squirt oil into the oil filter's mounting base inlet hole (adjacent to the threaded mounting nipple). This will prime the pump
3. Fill the filter with oil, reinstall and tighten
4. Start the engine. Oil pressure should return to normal within 10 seconds.

Replacing the oil in the crankcase immediately after draining and ensuring the spin-on oil filter is installed as per the manufacturer's instructions will help prevent the oil pump from losing its prime.

