First my apologies to our loyal readers. I've been traveling and under the gun with some deadlines that just could not be put off. So, I've been a little lame in the posting area for the last week or so.

Well as usually happens, one of our regular readers and a good friend of mine shot me an email last week talking about a boat he had visited recently that illustrated a problem that can have dire consequences if you miss what is a really important maintenance point. The issue has to do with the electrical termination points on the back of your engine(s) starter motor or alternator. I've talked in the past here about the importance of keeping these terminal studs booted (insulated) but what Wayne observed on his buddy's boat could easily turn into a horror show.

On the boat in question, the owner had recently installed high output alternators. Not a bad thing necessarily. But, in this case the higher output units were a bit larger physically that the original equipment alternators. No surprise there either. Well anyhow the installer had mounted the new units and adjusted the drive belts to an appropriate tension. In the process of doing all of this the stud on the back of the alternator that is normally labeled B + had a boot installed, but to achieve proper belt tension, the alternator had been pulled into a position that wedged this boot up tight against another metal component mounted on the engine.

Due to vibration, its just a matter of time before that boot gets chafed through, exposing a bare metal stud to this engine part. Look at the photo below and in the photo, the terminal actually got bent a bit and forced contact with the engine. The point of contact is identified by the obvious corrosion shown in the photo.

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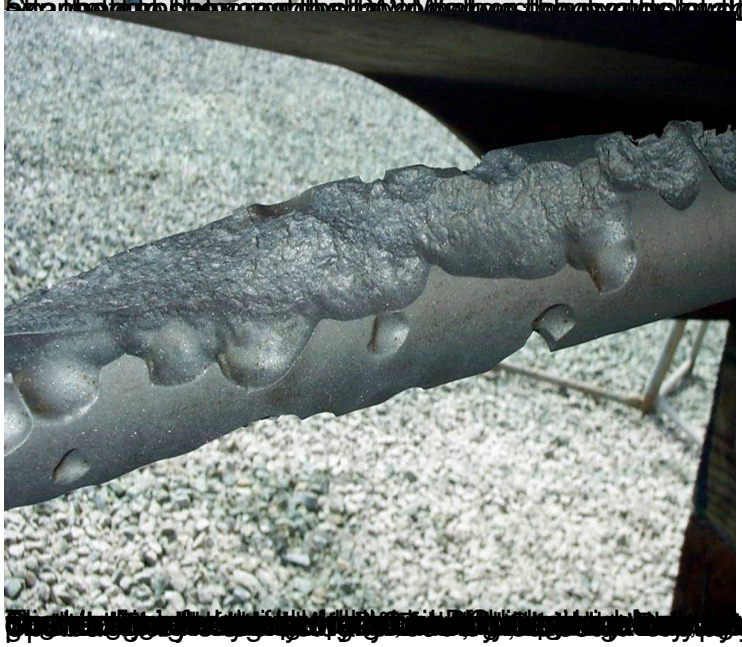

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