

PCA New England is a license provider of the **FuelT** –
Fuel Treatment Specialist – fuel and tank cleaning process

Why Do Fuel Filters Plug

Are your fuel filters plugging? Do you have slimy discolored fuels? Why? Clean fuel was purchased. Well yes, perhaps, but there is a difference in the EPA mandate fuels being formulated today in our refineries. These clean fuels deteriorate at a much faster rate than the fuels your parents purchased many decades ago. For instance, a University of Idaho scientist determined that “diesel fuel #2 degraded 26% after 28 days in storage”. Well let’s hope diesel fuel is not that unstable.... but, in general, fuel manufacturers state that the shelf life of diesel is 3 to 6 months, and that of gasoline 1 to 3 months. Not very long at all.

Why? First the lead was taken out. Now oxygenate additives – most notably, mtbe &/or ethyl alcohol derivatives – were added, replacing the aromatics. In short, today’s fuels are inherently less stable and more susceptible to bug infestation that thrive on the reformulated fuels, perfect for their dietary needs.

Bugs? Where did the bugs come from? Well, you see, bugs are everywhere. These varmints enter the fuel supply during the transportation of fuels from the refiner to the jobber to you. Along with the bugs, water enters, most predominately from condensation due to temperature variations within the tankage system, but also possibly from poor drainage, leaking fittings, or a number of other sources. Water, being heavier than fuels, settle to the bottom along with the bugs which utilize the fuel – yes the commodity you paid top dollar for – as food, doubling in population size every twenty minutes, developing into black, brown, and green long, slimy strings clinging to the bottom and sidewalls of storage tanks. Worst yet, the bugs convert the sulfur within the fuel into sulfuric acid which results in microbial induced corrosion, or MIC for short. In a matter of months, MIC can eat holes through your steel tanks, disregarding any cathodic protection system you may have installed.

You’re experiencing fuel filter plugging? Dirty tanks? Well, now you understand the most likely cause of these symptoms. Bugs, dead or alive, sludge and MIC, a gooey, jelly like slime, contaminating and degrading your tanks, and plugging your filters. Remember this: whenever there is fuel and water, there are bugs, and bugs are big dollar problems.

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