

Drips & Sparks

If you have any questions or problems with your LBC, send an e-mail to Randall Young at: HelpDesk@sctoa.org



Should I continue to buy proper Lucas replacement fuses, or try to substitute a standard (eg Buss) fuse?

The rating methods are very different, so it makes a big difference.

Like so many other things about our Triumphs, the British did things just a little bit different than the Americans, including what the ratings marked on fuses mean. The British Standard that Triumph used rated fuses by the current that was guaranteed to make them blow "instantly"; while the American (and now international) standard rates fuses by the current that they will carry forever. Fuses work on heat, so a small overload may take a long time to build up enough heat to melt the fusible element and "blow" the

fuse. How warm the fuse was to begin with plays a large role too. So the "carry" rating winds up being quite a bit lower than the "blow" rating ... the difference is roughly 2 to 1 !

So, what this means to you is that, if you elect to use common American fuses (Buss is one maker, there are others) in your Triumph, you need to use a much lower rated fuse than what your Triumph documentation says to use. There have been cases reported where a restored Triumph has caught fire from a short, because someone used American fuses with the Triumph recommended rating marked on them ... the short did not blow the fuse but instead set the wiring harness on fire !

Here is a conversion chart, lifted from a long-ago Buss fuse catalog:

English Type . . .	Buss Replacement
50 amp . . . . .	.AGC 30
35 amp . . . . .	.AGC 25
30 amp . . . . .	.AGC 20
25 amp . . . . .	.AGC 15
20 amp . . . . .	.AGC 10
10 amp . . . . .	.AGC 7-1/2
5 amp . . . . .	.AGC 3

Personally, I feel even this chart results in fuses rather larger than needed, so for example I use an AGC 20 to replace the original "35 amp" fuse in my TR3A. My conversion chart would go more like :

English Type . . .	Buss Replacement
50 . . . . .	.25
35 . . . . .	.20
30 . . . . .	.15
25 . . . . .	.15
20 . . . . .	.10
10	5
5	3

Joe Pawlak and Glenn Merrell put on a good visual demonstration of the difference in fuse ratings at VTR this year, where they first put in a "25 amp" Lucas-equivalent fuse and applied enough load to blow it. Then they installed a 25 amp American fuse and applied the same load. The fuse did not blow, but after just a minute or so the wire started visibly leaking smoke!

BTW, "proper" fuses with the correct British markings are available from the usual suppliers.

Randall

Can You Raed Tihs?

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