

DAF Service

Ignition timing tips

Over the years, I have come across a surprising number of DAFs from 44s to Volvo 340s, where the ignition timing was set wildly out. In some cases it was amazing that the cars were running at all.

I personally believe that unless a tachometer is available, it is always much safer to set the timing by static method using a test lamp rather than a strobe. On the air-cooled engines, I do NOT recommend the use of a strobe.

A test lamp can easily be made using a lamp holder (either purchased or acquired from an old dashboard panel – the plastic type with two spade connectors), a length of wire and two crocodile clips.

Air-cooled engines

On the DAF 31/32/33/44 models, there are different settings:

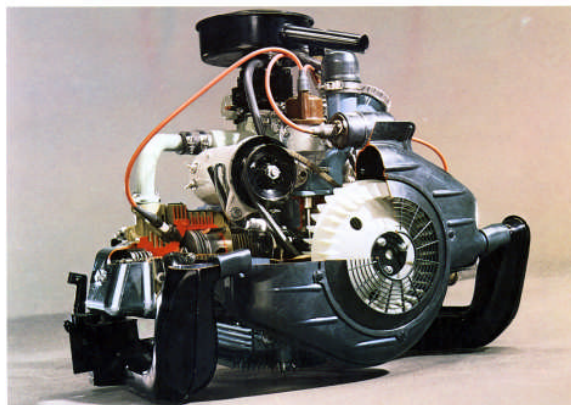
Pre July 1971 31/32/33
Pre July 1971 44

4 degrees BTDC (Before Top Dead Centre)
6 degrees BTDC (Before Top Dead Centre)

To adjust, connect the test lamp between earth and the contact breaker terminal on the coil (this is the terminal from which a wire connects to the side of the distributor body) and remove the HT lead from the distributor or the distributor cap to prevent the engine starting accidentally.

Switch the ignition on and turn the engine clockwise until the required timing mark in the crankshaft pulley aligns with the mark on the body of the engine. At this point the lamp should light. If the lamp lights too early, the ignition is too far advanced and if it lights too late, then it is retarded.

To correct, loosen the clamp and rotate the distributor body until the lamp just lights. Before the distributor is tightened, rotate the engine one revolution and recheck. If it is still out, correct and repeat the procedure.



Water-cooled engines

To adjust the timing on DAF 55/66/Volvo 340, the procedure is similar except on the 66/340 where the timing marks are on the flywheel.

DAF 55	0 TDC (Top Dead Centre)
DAF 66 (1100)	0 TDC
DAF 66 (1300)	6 degrees BTDC (Before Top Dead Centre)
Volvo 340 B14.0	3 degrees BTDC
Volvo 340 B14.1	6 degrees BTDC
Volvo 340 B14.2	6 degrees BTDC
Volvo 340 B14.4	Cannot be adjusted

To adjust the timing using a strobe, clean the timing mark on the pulley or flywheel as appropriate and mark the timing chain cover on the 55 or clutch housing on the 66. Highlight the marks with white paint.

Disconnect the vacuum pipe from the distributor and block its end with a small screw/bolt. Connect strobe to Number 1 spark plug (the one furthest from the radiator) and connect a tachometer. Start the engine, **having made sure the car is not in gear**.

Adjust the slow running speed to below 800 RPM. Point the strobe to the timing marks and adjust the distributor by rotating clockwise or anti-clockwise as necessary. If the revs of the engine rise above 800 RPM, adjust the slow running as necessary and recheck the timing. When set correctly, tighten the distributor and refit the vacuum pipe.

We hope that this will help you or whoever services your car. If you have any problems, please contact us.

