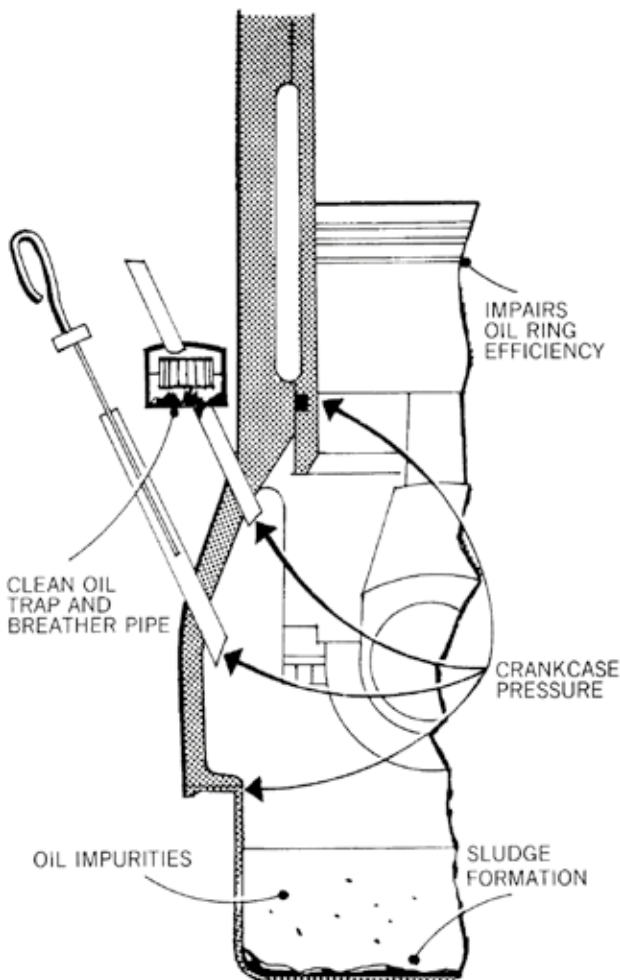




# Pressurised Crankcases - A check on an engine's breathing system could solve operating problems.



An engine must breathe, and we tend to associate good engine breathing with an efficient, clean air filter and an unobstructed well designed air intake system.

The fact that the *crankcase* must also breathe is often forgotten. We often hear of engines which blow oil past the oil level dipstick but show no evidence of excessive fumes passing the crankcase breather.

A relatively small amount of pressure from the combustion spaces will inevitably pass the piston rings particularly during the break-in period; normally this very small amount of pressure will be gently ventilated through the crankcase breather system and the engine will function correctly.

If the breathing system should become blocked, the crankcase can become pressurised, if this occurs the pressure will reduce the efficiency of the oil control rings and problems with high oil consumption may be caused. Poor crankcase ventilation will also prevent the engine disposing of impurities such as water vapour and acids which are formed as a by-product of combustion; these will reduce the life expectancy of the lubricating oil, cause sludging and engine operating problems. The build up of gases in a pressurised crankcase will attempt to ventilate wherever possible, even past the dipstick.

A small amount of time spent ensuring that the crankcase breather filter is clean and that the system is free to operate will save a large amount of time investigating and curing the problems that a blocked breather may cause.