

Wheels: Rob writes with an ignition heat problem. “The ignition, that is the place where the key goes, gets hot the longer I drive. I never had the problem before this summer. It seems as if the temperature is at least 30 to 40 degrees warmer than the ambient car temperature. Plus, it gets hotter and hotter the longer I drive. I replaced the starter last winter. I don’t know if that would cause any problem with the circuit heating.”

Halderman: From your description of the problem, I think that the cause of the ignition key getting hot is most likely due to high resistance in the ignition switch. When the contacts wear, resistance increases, which causes a voltage drop across the circuit. This voltage drop (resistance) creates heat. If this is the case, you may have noticed that some accessories such as the windshield wipers are now operating slower than normal. If this is occurring, then I suggest that the ignition switch be replaced. It is possible that the starter motor itself was not defective, but that the voltage drop across the ignition switch was causing the starter to not engage every time or not with enough force due to reduced current to the starter solenoid.

