

**Wheels:** An e-mail from Ken says, “I need some advice on an engine starting and stalling problem. I just bought a 2000 Ford 250 truck with 83,000 miles and a small V8. After having it for about one week without any signs of engine problems, the truck sat parked in my steep driveway for 3 days (front end up and tail gate down the hill). I attempted to start it and it would not start. The starter cranked the engine easily, there was good visible spark, but it would not start. After a number of attempts, I then rolled the truck down the driveway in a desperate attempt to get it started. Surprise! It started when the truck was on level ground. I went on to work and about three days after the first event, the truck shut off on me while driving in city traffic. It took me a few attempts before the engine finally started. It has been about four days since the shut off event. The engine is running fine in city traffic and at highway speeds without any problems. I put a gas cleaning additive into the tank, but I am just guessing/hoping this might help. I would like to know if you can help me with an approach that I should follow in an attempt to isolate the problem, before it leaves me stranded.”

**Halderman:** At first I thought that your problem could be due to a tripped inertia switch, which is a safety device that opens the electrical circuit to the fuel pump if the vehicle is bumped or jarred as would occur in a collision. However, the inertia switch must be manually reset once it is tripped so this cannot be the problem. If the fuel level was extremely low, I think it may be possible that the pickup for the pump that is inside the fuel tank may not be able to draw enough fuel for the engine to start. If so, try to keep the tank level above one-quarter filled. The stalling at idle could have many causes including a dirty throttle plate or even the use of summer grade gasoline in cool fall weather conditions.

