

Wheels: In an e-mail, Mike writes, “My Camry has 127,000 miles and has been flawless other than the replacement of normal items such as battery, wipers, etc. I change the oil every 3 months with a new filter and manufacturer’s recommended 10W 30 Castrol. One early morning 6 days ago, it didn’t start though the engine almost turned over. There was plenty of spark from a 2-year old DieHard battery and a new starter installed just 3 months ago. After calling a tow truck and making an appointment at the dealer for next week, I tried to start it again this morning and it started up! There was thick exhaust smoke for 30 seconds, but otherwise has started about 7 times since with no apparent problem. Any ideas for this infrequent difficulty? A possible fuel pump?”

Halderman: The first thing that I thought about was that the fuel pressure regulator is defective, allowing fuel to flow into the intake manifold when the engine stops flooding the engine. Other possible causes include a stuck open fuel injector. The fuel pressure regulator can be tested using a hand-operated vacuum pump to see if the diaphragm can hold vacuum. If it leaks, then the regulator needs to be replaced.

