

Ask Gib..... as no question is a stupid question

"Bucktooth in Michigan asks"

Dear Gib, my solid stainless steel DIN "valve saver / gas saver" plugs will not screw in? Is it the DIN Valve or the solid stainless steel plugs, and can it be fixed?

That's a great question "Bucky" and I have also found it frustrating when I could not easily fit my DIN plugs, at least until I learned how to maintain these little life savers. What you are suffering is a technical termed "Hillbilly Teeth" on your DIN plugs. And I can certainly help you out as I helped my girl Miley with her toothy problem.



Miley before and after I helped her with a bit of dental advice.....

Now to get started there are two popular "Solid" DIN Plugs that have O-ring to seal when the valve gets accidentally bumped, as well as protect the valve from dings or drops. The Stainless Steel plug from Highland is the highest quality. The second is the Brass nickel plated plug that is solid, except for the backside has been drilled out to save precious metal and make the price cheap? They are not the quality of the Highland, but come in at half to third the price. They both do the job when installed and it is handling of these plugs when they are out of the valve that causes your frustration "Hillbilly Teeth" . The tank valve speaking of quality valve such as Blue Steel made by SOS Italy is manufactured of CW 617 N pressed brass with nickel and chrome plating. When the Stainless Steel DIN plug is dropped accidentally you may not see the valve thread "teeth" getting dinged, but they do. Stainless steel comes in many grades but you don't need to know the specifics but just that it is hard and harder than the brass valve it screws into. Pro vs Cons here of the expensive SS plug compared to the less expensive brass plugs. Well the stainless steel plug is harder, which makes it harder to ding and harder to repair. The brass is softer and easier to ding, and easier to repair. With the stainless steel plug you do NOT want to force it into the valve or you can literally cut new thread in the softer brass material.

To solve the problem you will need a small narrow tapered triangle shaped metal file, or " Needle File " . This is used to file off the errant bumps on the "outside" thread of the DIN plug (not inside valve). Be patient and work slowly, remembering that stainless steel is hard metal to work with and you don't want to remove the thread completely, just shave the bump down.



Now the simple solution is to put the regulator cap on the SS din plug as soon as you take it out, or don't drop the damn thing!



Next question is from "**Xenophobia in Illinois**"

Dear Gib, are you a raving xenophobe or racist as you constantly use the phrase "Cheap Chinese Knock Off" ... Where do you think you got your iPhone from?

Wooooooh Xeno, hold your terracotta horses just a moment. Ok, yes I've tossed this phrase around "Cheap Chinese Knock Off" when I have described the knock off valve that one on-line retailer sells on Faber rebreather tanks (and others) as primary valve? Now this smacks me right in the face as ultimate irony! What happens, does somebody wake up one day and say, I want to buy a Ferrari and i'll skip the Pirelli tires and go to Fleet Farm for some knock off "cheap" tire, or no I don't think I'll take the Maserati engine as I think the Chevy Sonic engine is good enough....? WTH? When you call 1-800-Copy-China for a copy cat valve, you are not asking them to make a better valve, but you specifically want something cheaper to replace the original. So what is wrong with the SOS (SanoSub) made in Italy in-line valve that is sold with Faber rebreather tanks? Nothing, it is the best valve on the best cylinder on the market.

Now using this idiom of Cheap Chinese Knock Off was just grabbing the low hanging fruit of derisive phrases, but the shoe fits. And I have no illusions or delusions of being politically correct as I type this newsletter on my HP laptop made in China, and you are right Xeno, I love my iPhone made at a Chinese factory. Its not that China cannot make great products, but copy cats are not known for being better, just cheaper. And I am no different from anyone else who wants something cheaper, but lets define what cheaper means. Are we talking about something that is less expensive or lower quality? I want quality at a lower price, but that's an oxymoron. What happened to pets all over America when we purchase cheap dog food made in China....yes they replace the protein with a poison that kills dogs!

The copy cat valve made in some Asian country to replace the SanoSub valve of Italy, is a lower quality "cheaper" copy cat period! What's next a less expensive steel tank that is a copy cat? You get what you pay for, and you know the name Faber has always stood for quality, don't accept a cheap valve.

Oh, little known fact just cause.... half of my family is Asian, and I grew up eating kimchee, so yes I am the brother a different mother!


"On Fire in Pennsylvania" writes:

Recently I purchased a 3 button MAV kit and I am wondering if the O-rings or lubricant used to assemble are oxygen compatible?

Excellent question and lets put that fire out, but not dampen the enthusiasm. The 3 color button valve inserts that are sold as a MAV button kit are simple BCD Power Inflator Button "inserts" and are made for general scuba use. These were not ordered with specific oxygen compatible components as the use of a MAV is at low pressure, to the point that there is ZERO combustibility and no concern for oxygen compatible components.

And yes I understand that there are anal retentive CCR manufacturers that insist that every component on the rebreather must use oxygen compatible lubricant. This is essentially a fail safe to prevent accidental use of a hydrocarbon like silicone grease being used on a first stage, or high pressure part of the regulator that could have an oxygen fire. While that is a noble and just cause, it also goes overboard when parts like the MAV would benefit from using a more superior lubricant such as silicone or a better elastomer than Viton for an o-ring.

The oxygen fire debate will never be settled in some paranoid minds and this reminds me of twenty years ago when my ccr instructor Garret was debating on the early Rebreather Forum. At this time it was crude, rude, obnoxious and full of know it all experts, and today it is... well it is.... I guess a little less crude with moderators, but still full of know it all experts? And at this time this instructor who was trying to flex his muscles and assert his presence on the forum was debating the use of Silicone being used on an Inspiration DSV where he stated that you must only use Christolube to be oxygen safe. The debate was crude and obnoxious, and Garret was adamant that since the DSV was used under greater than surface pressure, therefore the partial pressure of oxygen was elevated.... whoever it was that he was debating, finally stated "Garret Put Down The Whiskey Bottle". Sad but true, and today the Whiskey Bottle dulls the brain with irrational fears of oxygen fires in low pressure environments.

If you are truly worried about the components of the MAV, then I would ask you to consider the fact that the Delrin (acetal plastic) that the MAV is made of is NOT oxygen compatible material! 

See the last issue of CCR News with MAV maintenance as I ramble on about silicone verse Christolube. But if you wish to use an inferior lubricant and inferior elastomer in your O-rings in a low pressure environment of a Manual Add Valve, to prevent an oxygen fire which is illogical, then I am certainly happy to assist you with expensive and unnecessary parts.

Just ask Gib.

Keep sending your questions to Ask Gib at gibanigav@hotmail.com

Gib Anigav

*Do as I say and Not as I do,
But Dive Safely!*