

COPPER IN EVERYDAY LIFE: CARS



Did you know that the body of the 1921 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost was made of solid copper? The car contained nickel and silver accessories and the engine was virtually solid brass, which is an alloy of copper and zinc. You can see the restored vehicle in all its beauty on display at the National Automobile Museum in Reno, Nevada. This week, Mine Reader explores the ways copper has influenced the transportation industry over the past century.

While cars today aren't made of solid copper, the metal continues to play a crucial role in many systems modern vehicles use. Since the Ford Model T was built in 1916, copper has been a necessary component of automobiles and many of their functionalities.

Motors, alternators and many other systems within a vehicle rely on high conductivity provided by copper. The average automobile contains approximately 42 pounds of copper and a hybrid vehicle has 75 pounds of the mineral. Luxury automobiles can have around 1,500 copper wires, totaling about one mile in length! Audi, Porsche and Aston Martin models still use 90 percent copper, 10 percent nickel tubing for their brake lines.

Additionally, electronic applications in cars require copper to operate. This includes antilock braking systems, cruise control and the ability to control temperatures within a car. Without copper, cars as we know them today wouldn't exist.

Sources:

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