

Lowered cars - Possible fuel hazard

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Figure 1

Fuel regulator and steering tie rod arm.

This article is for car owners who have lowered their car. This was only apparent **when my car** (Calibra 2L 16v, C20XE engine) was lowered 60mm and everything was fine for just about over a year. Until one day I had to go to work, so I did the usual routine of walking to the garage and getting the Calibra out of the garage. As soon as I opened the garage door I was overwhelmed by the smell of petrol.

There was a big fuel leak somewhere, it was coincidence that the night before I grounded the car out on the entrance to a pub car park. So initial thoughts was that the fuel lines under the car or the fuel tank itself was damaged. So I pushed the car out and looked on the garage floor, not a trace of fuel at the back of the car but a huge puddle where the engine bay was, and it was still dripping out!



Figure 2

Damaged fuel line.

I hooked up the bonnet and stuck my head under, and again the strong smell of petrol was evident. It was defiantly round the engine bay somewhere but not near the bottom of where I original thought. I took off the SFI air box to have a closer look where the fuel lines were. On the left hand side of the engine bay, under the brake fluid reservoir is the fuel regulator (as Figure 1 part A). On the bottom of this unit is a large thick black rubber pipe which connects to a thinner metal pipe (Figure 1 part B) which leads down past the steering linkage arm (Figure 1 part C) to the bottom of the bulk head and under the car.



Figure 3

Close up of the damaged fuel line.

The fuel leak was coming from the thinner metal pipe (Figure 1 part B), which the steering tie rod arm (Figure 1 part C) was rubbing against and working its way through (Figure 3). The amount of fuel that must of been lost, no wonder I wasn't getting any performance out of the car :)

The reason why it was rubbing was because the suspension was lowered, and hence also the steering tie rod arm was affected and it raised it's height in the engine bay. So the original path of the steering tie rod arm was no more, and it fouled on the fuel lines. Obviously a fuel leak in a engine bay with a lot of heat generated and the electric sparks coming from the spark plugs and HT leads etc is **extremely dangerous**. It could have been a **fire waiting to happen**.

So my advice is if you have had the car lowered, check what factors have changed and look for components rubbing on each other.

The problem was fixed with a new piece of rubber pipe fitted and tied back to the bulkhead far away as possible from any moving parts. As mentioned this was on a Calibra which was lowered but the same fact will remain for other Vauxhall cars. So if/when you get your car lowered, just look out for these tiny things.

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