

WET OR DRY?

Dry vacuum/pressure pumps have had pretty dismal service records. Heat is a major problem, and too much of it can cause premature failures of the carbon vanes. Only in recent years have manufacturers improved the basic designs by installed viewing ports, for example. Still, there's little way to predict a dry pump's failure.

If going all-electric isn't in the cards but you still want to minimize the likelihood of suffering a vacuum system failure, you may want to consider a so-called "wet" vacuum pump, which uses engine oil for internal lubrication.

They bolt onto the same accessory pads as a dry pump, but require some plumbing, namely oil feed and return lines, plus an air/oil separator. All of this weighs more than a dry pump, of course, but once the installation is sorted out, the pump usually requires no maintenance. Wet pumps routinely go to the engine's TBO and get overhauled with the other accessories.

The only issue with a wet pump is they're for vacuum systems only—the engine oil mixes with the air and can't be used in a pressure system.

