

Rudy Silva's Big Idea

- **Lifting Heavy Alternators is No Longer a Pain in the Back**

By LISA HUYNH

(August 21, 2003) San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Mechanic Rudy Silva has created a device that makes the two-man task of lifting heavy vehicle alternators a thing of the past.

About 9 months ago, Silva was fed up with the back strain he got from manually removing and installing 100-pound alternators in NABI buses. Alternators charge bus batteries and run electrical systems.



Rudy Silva attaches the "holding bracket" tool to an alternator and an engine hoist.



The left part of the "holding bracket" tool connects to the lifting arm of an engine hoist; the right side attaches to the alternator.

PHOTOS BY LISA HUYNH

So, he made a "holding bracket" tool that lifts the alternators with ease.

"It was just a matter of figuring how to make a tool that would connect the alternator to an engine hoist," says Silva. "I made all the appropriate measurements and welded two pieces of strong steel together and we've been using it since."

A mechanic can use the two-part tool by attaching one part to the alternator and the other to a lifting arm of an engine hoist. Once connected, the mechanic can easily remove the alternator from the engine onto a work service.

After servicing the alternator, the mechanic can reverse the process to reinstall it.

"When I made the tool, I was really concerned about the safety of all the guys who have to work on this task," says Silva. "You don't have to worry about hurting yourself, anymore. The tool just makes the job easier and faster."

Silva has made about nine "holding bracket" tools, three for each shift.

"Rudy is a smart guy who likes to use his brain harder than his back," says Assistant Maintenance Manager Richard Famighetti. "This tool will save time, money and maybe a few banged-up fingers."

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