

Q: What would cause my Catalina 30 to shut down intermittently, as though someone turned off the ignition key?

A: Unless someone replaced it, your Catalina 30 has a long wiring harness between the engine and the control panel in the cockpit, which includes three 8-pin quick-disconnects. Two of these disconnects are easily inspected, one being located at the engine, and the other immediately behind the instrument panel.

The third quick-disconnect is hidden under the cabin sole, and can only be found by removing the square wooden access panel through which the stuffing box of the prop shaft is serviced, and reaching (a couple feet) over toward the galley stove area. In our Catalina 30, this third quick-disconnect was laying in a puddle of bilge water, and the contacts themselves were corroded to the point that two of them pulled apart as I tried to separate the two halves of the disconnect.

Everything electrical that your Atomic 4 needs to start and run, goes through these disconnects, including the important primary ignition circuit. If this circuit opens up, it will shut down your engine just as if someone accidentally turned off the ignition switch. I would inspect all three of these disconnects before I looked anywhere else for the cause of your problem.