

## BUMPER TO BUMPER

The following article is a reprint from the July - August 1976 Scoop. Those of you that own a 1958 - 1960 Thunderbird may have already or may soon need to replace your padded dash. After a period of years the original pads installed by Ford tend to droop noticeably, especially over the instrument panel and over the glove box.

Those of you that have already replaced your old dash may choose not to read this article. Instead you can sit back, relax, and reminisce about how much you enjoyed doing this job. This article is primarily intended for our newer members who have yet to experience this task.

From Carl Davis - North East Region Director and Mid Atlantic Chapter President:

The Mid- Atlantic Chapter's "Dash Pad Crew" has installed two dash pads in members' car and given instructions to two other members. To give the rest of the club the benefit of our experience, here is what we did:

TOOLS: Screw drivers: 1-Straight Phillips, 1-Off set Phillips, 1-Short Phillips, 1-Straight blade screw driver or nut driver to remove instruments.

Wrenches: 1-short 3/8" open end, 1-short box end 3/8", 1 1/2" & 9/16" open end. Deep socket wrench for removing radio nuts. Socket for removing steering wheel nut, a steering wheel puller, a scratch awl or ice pick, sharp hobby knife or razor blade, a roll of masking tape, and a vacuum cleaner.

Where possible tape screws to the holes they come out of. A couple of small jars with tops for small screws and nuts. Use needle nose pliers to turn retaining rings on light and ignition switches. Do not disconnect wires from the light and ignition switches.

### START:

Disconnect battery, remove steering wheel and turn signal lever. We did not remove either of these on the first installation. However, at the suggestion of Jim Dottling, we did so on the second one and the work was easier. Remove the chrome w/s mouldings, from dash to roof, inside, left and right. Remove the w/s to dash garnish mouldings. Put a mark or some tape on the outside of the w/s where the screws came out. This will help in locating the holes when reinstalling the moulding. Remove the dash extension panels at the end of the dash left and right. Disconnect the ignition switch and head light switch and push back out of the way. It is not necessary to disconnect any wires from the switches and it is advisable not to. Disconnect the hood release and top control (if so equipped) from the bottom of the dash. Remove the radio and

air conditioner trim panels. I would also take the bolt holding the radio loose and push the radio back out of the way. This makes it easy to snug the new pad up to the dash panel. Remove the glove box door and trim inside the glove box. If you have a glove box light, disconnect it and pull the switch out. (Remember, this has to go back in so don't forget it!) Pull the chrome instrument retainers off. Remove the instruments and tag the lights and wires. I would suggest using tags instead of tape and write out the name of the instrument they came from. Remove the instrument panel from the dash panel. The instrument panel is held in place by (8) 3/8" nuts. They are located around the outside edge of the instrument panel. These 8 nuts are very difficult to get to. The short 3/8" wrench is used here. Two of the upper nuts also hold wiring and harness clamps. They will have to be bent back out of the way so you can get at the nuts. Be careful not to lose these nuts. The removing and replacing of these 8 nuts is the single most difficult part of installing a new pad. Do not remove the dash panel. Jim "The King" does not remove the instrument panel. Let the panel hang by the w/s wiper cable. Do not remove the wiper cable. Now remove the old dash pad. Clean the crumbs off the dash panel. Vacuum the area and the panel. Save that part of the old pad where the radio and the air came through to use as a template.

Trim the new pad. It might be best to fit the pad to the panel first so you can see how much your going to have to trim. You will have to cut notches for the defrosters, left and right. You are going to have two notches for the garnish moulding screws and remove excess from pad where it extends past the garnish moulding. The new pads are thicker than the old ones, so it will change the angle of the screws going back in. It is tough getting the screws back in the garnish mouldings. The ends of the pad are going to have to be trimmed rather severely. I would suggest that the new pad be put in place and trimmed very slowly and carefully. You will note that very little of the ends of the old pad went under the dash panel. The factory taped the ends of the pad in place. You should bend a lip under the panel. This is also tough. When cutting the holes for the air conditioner and radio be careful not to make the opening too large as you can't make the hole smaller. You also have to cut the opening for the radio access panel, under the dash. Use the awl to punch holes for the glove box door, inside trim - remember the glove box light. You will also have to punch or cut holes for the instrument panel studs unless you didn't remove the panel and trimmed away that part of the pad. Another tough part of putting the nuts back on the back side of the instrument panel. We found that they went back easier than they came off. While the instrument panel is off, I would install a new constant voltage regulator for the temperature and gas gauge. It might just make them work better. Just a touch of oil on the bolts and screws will make them go back easier. Now put every thing back where it came from. You will find that you

are going to have to do a little adjusting on the glove box door to make it work properly. This is done by trial and error but it is not hard to do.

Jim Dottling swears that he can put a pad in within two to three hours and he might be able to. However, it took two of us about 8 hours. It could be that with enough experience we will be able to catch up to King Jim. I would like to thank Jim for his help. I listed the things we did when installing the first pad and sent it to Jim. He made corrections and suggestions which helped a great deal with the second pad.

Once again, thanks for sending this article to us Carl. Undoubtably many of our members will find it invaluable in upcoming restorations.