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Installation Guidance

Model: Triumph Spitfire Mk.3 & Mk.IV / 1500 1967 thru 1980

There is nothing technically difficult to prevent the average mechanically minded person from replacing the hood. After all the hood is simply screwed / riveted and glued to the various parts of the frame. No special tools / sewing or trimming skills are required, you simply remove the old hood and fit the new one to all the relevant fixing points on the frame. There are factors which will affect the fit of the new hood. Take a good look at the old hood for signs of damage or poor fit. This can sometimes be due to a worn or mal-adjusted frame that will need attention. You should allow approximately 2-3 hours to complete the task and remember that soft tops must be fitted in a warm dry environment. The material will be pliable and easier to stretch when warm. These guidance notes will help you remove the old hood and install the new one in the correct sequence. As you remove the old hood you will get a much clearer indication of the re-fitting procedure. The old hood will be a valuable point of reference during the installation of your new hood.

Tools required: Pop rivet gun and a selection of 1/8th rivets. 1/8th drill bits to drill out existing rivets and a selection of screwdrivers and spanners. A strong contact adhesive such as "Evo-Stik Impact", (Available at most hardware stores, usually seen in red tins). To obtain the strongest possible bond we always apply 2 coats to the hood fabric allowing the 1st coat to completely dry before continuing. The steel frame will only require 1 coat of adhesive.

Important:
Before removing the old hood check the new one carefully. Is the new hood the correct model / colour / material etc? Are there any obvious signs of faults or damage? No point finding this out after you have removed the old one so please check the new hood carefully. You can loosely drape it over the old one for direct comparison.

Removing old hood
Unclip front of frame and fold back.

1. Remove the rubber seal from the front of the header rail and use a 1/8th drill to drill out all rivets that hold the front metal seal retaining bar to the header rail. Note there are also rivets holding the front side window valance strap to the sides of the header rail that will need removing. This should now release the hood from the front header rail.
2. Unbolt the rear frame rail to release the rear of the hood from the bodywork. The bolts are accessible from inside the car below the rear window area.
3. Unclip the hood from the frame and remove from the hood from the car. Finally drill out rivets that hold 3 off black plastic fasteners to rear frame rail and remove rail from old hood.

The old hood should now be fully released from the frame.

Now would be a good time to check the frame for any signs of wear or damage. Check it moves freely both up and down. Check for any irregularities in its operation and that it is correctly aligned by checking the gaps between the frame, car body, tops of door glass etc are correct and even on each side of the vehicle.

Installing the new hood
Having successfully removed the old hood you will already have a good idea how and where the new hood fastens to the frame. These guidance notes will provide pointers to the correct installation order. Note you should take extra care when handling the new hood and the folding frame. There are many unprotected sharp edges on the folding frame which have the potential to cause damage to the new hood and the car body work. Take precautions to protect the rear bodywork when installing the rear rail and take particular care of the new soft top during all phases of the installation. The fabric is tough but until it is fully installed there is always a risk of damage either by miss-handling or inadvertently trapping the fabric in the folding frame. The rear window is particularly vulnerable to creasing so pay particular attention to it when folding the frame back during various phases of the installation.

The installation will commence at the rear of the car. With the frame up loosely drape the new soft top over the framework and carefully check that all fixing points can be aligned to the frame. Now would be a good time to check the soft top for any damage prior to the installation. Once installation begins we cannot be held responsible for damage that might occur during the installation.

1. The first part of the installation is done on a bench. Re-fit the rear frame rail to the inside bottom flap on the rear window. This is initially glued around the rail and 3 new metal replacement fasteners are riveted through the hood into the rail. It is very important that this rail is properly centralised onto the rear of the hood. If it's slightly off centre the pre-fitted press studs may not align correctly with the car body. We advise that you glue it first and then offer it up to the car and ensure that all the press studs can be fastened around the rear of the hood before the 3 rear studs are riveted through the rail.
2. Re-bolt to rear rail to the car and with the frame closed clip on all the rear fasteners and pull the hood evenly towards the front of the car. From inside the vehicle clip the 2 bow straps around the 2 frame bows to hold the hood in position.
3. The next task is to pull the hood taught over the frame and glue to the front header rail. It is advisable to have two people, one each side when pulling the hood taught. A word of warning before you proceed. The hood is easily torn at a point 3-4" back from the front edge on each side. This is an area you will be pulling on when tensioning the hood so take care not to pull in a manner which will cause a tear. You should first mark the leading edge position of the header rail on the inside of the hood. Use some chalk to do this and apply glue to the front face of the header rail and its corresponding position on the inside of the hood. (See our previous advice about using two coats of glue on the hood fabric). When ready pull hood taught onto front header rail. Note that the small flap on each side of the hood will wrap around the edges of the header rail. A common problem here is to leave the flap short of covering the edges of the header rail. We advise that one person should hold the hood clear of the header rail while the other person correctly aligns his front edge / flap to the rail. Then the hood should be pulled taught to the other side while again the hood is held clear of the header rail. This technique will ensure the hood does not grab prematurely to the glue on the front header rail thus preventing you from fully stretching it out to each side. You can adjust the tension by lifting the material before the glue dries.
4. When you are happy with the tension on the hood you should rivet the small strap to its location on the frame above the front of the door glass.
5. Unclip the inner frame bows, unclip all fasteners around the back and pull the hood material clear of frame as you fold the frame back. Fold the hood material around the front header rail and re-fit the rubber seal metal retaining bars over the hood material and fasten to the header rail using 18"th rivets. Re-fit the rubber seal.

Assuming you have no bits and pieces left over the installation should now be complete.

The new hood may be very tight at first. This is normal. It should be left up and used for a few weeks. Any excessive tension will soon dissipate with use. Never leave your hood folded for more than 24 hours or shrinkage can occur. Observe car manufacturer's instructions when folding and caring for your hood. Many people fail to follow the correct procedure when folding the hood back. This usually results in stress being placed on the side windows causing the window material to split. A correctly folded hood will never cause this problem however just one incorrect folding can cause un-repairable damage. Here is the correct method: When folding the hood down always unclip the inner frame bows, unclip all rear fasteners and pull hood fabric clear over the rear boot lid allowing the frame to fold without pinching or straining any part of the hood. Once the frame is fully down fold side windows inwards over main rear window and fold over top of frame. Fit hood cover to protect the hood. None of the windows should ever be folded, creased or trapped in the frame. Ensure the side window area folds without buckling or creasing. Many vehicles have inherent design problems / flaws which affect the hood during normal operation. Check for signs of this on your old hood and be aware that we have no control over factors which will cause premature wear and tear under normal operation. Such damage would not be covered under warranty.

In addition this model of car has a poor method of seal around the door glass. (Particularly the Mk.IV / 1500). Mal-adjusted door glass usually sticks out away from the hood frame causing large gaps between the hood frame and the glass. Gaps around the door glass are common place and are an inherent design problem with this vehicle.