



# THE MODEL T FORD

ITS REPAIR,  
SERVICE, AND  
RESTORATION

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## Removing Those Stubborn Headlight Rims

Ford headlight rims can present a tough go when trying to push against the reflector spring, twist left, and rotate at the same time, in order to release all four of the rivet ends of the rim from the headlight bucket bayonet groove.

Instructions for removing the rim are in the early 1920's Ford (Owners) Manual, available for download at [modelt.org](http://modelt.org): *How is the Headlight Lens installed? Answer No.127:* "Remove the door by pressing in and turning to the left until the pins in the door rim disengage from the notches in the lamp case. You can then readily see how the lens fits into the door rim."

When new, those rims likely came off very easily. The Ford Service Bulletin (May 15, 1920) described a tool that was a wrap-around band of metal, with holes drilled to place over the four rivet heads on the rim. Today, after untold years or storage outside, those rims can rust tight or be stuck beyond easy twisting with a single pair of hands! A nifty tool is available from Model T parts suppliers that makes the removal process a lot easier. It is a heavy cross-bar with the ends grooved to fit over two of the rivet heads on a rim. Here are some hints on how to work with this tool for removing those pesky, hard-to-remove rims.



A single rim rivet end shown on lower left. The bayonet groove in the headlight bucket has recess, like a bulb socket, to lock the rim. The left side of the groove has the exit for that rivet.



1) Apply your favorite penetrating oil where the surface of the headlight rim meets the headlight bucket. Allow time for the oil to seep in and help loosen any hardened rust or dirt.



2) Now tap all around the rim with a soft faced dead blow mallet, to free the rim edges that can be stuck to the headlight bucket. You want to see movement all the way around the headlight. Use care and lightly bump the rim. Don't break the lens!



3) With the rim loosened so it can push into the retaining spring behind the reflector, the removal tool is now ready to be used. Note the grooved ends on the tool to mate over two of the rim rivet heads.



4) Use a rag that is doubled and tucked around the rim. Place it between the tool grooves and the rivet heads to help protect the paint or plating. The rag provides added grip and slip resistance while rotating the rim.



5) Now the rim can be twisted left. Push in hard on the tool to overcome the resistance from the spring behind the reflector. I have found that using my thigh helps to give more power to the push, as both hands are needed to grip the ends of the crossbar tool for the left twist.



6) After the twist left, the rim and lens are now canted and ready to be pulled away from the bayonet grooves in the headlight bucket.



7) Rim and lens are neatly removed, still captured in the rag and tool. (Note: the gap in this reflector cotton cord seal should be at the bottom, for water or moisture to drain away with gravity.)

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