



THE MODEL T FORD

ITS REPAIR,
SERVICE, AND
RESTORATION

DAN TREACE
MTFCI Technical Editor

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 76
Earleton, FL 32631
USA

E-mail:
tmodelman@comcast.net

Phone:
(904) 616-4362

Repairing and Installing the Horn Switch

The Ford horn switch for the later cars is a rather simple contact switch; the components are shown in the photo below. Remove the long bolt and nut to allow the switch housing to spread, then remove the button and switch contacts. Carefully expand the housing just enough to remove it from the steering column.



Clean up the individual pieces, as well as the long bolt and nut that hold the housing in place, and give the housing a fresh coat of paint. The switch contacts have two wire lugs and tiny screws to attach the cloth-covered horn wires. Replacement wires are available from your favorite parts supplier. Clean the internal contact parts of the small brass ribbon switch; a fine file or 600 grit sandpaper on a small blade will work. Try to not spread the contacts too far apart when cleaning. It's also easier to just replace the old steel horn wire screws; in this instance, tiny stainless steel screws were used.



Once the pieces have been cleaned and inspected, take note of the button condition. The button is made of Fordite material (same as used on the steering wheel rim). While strong, sometimes the button 'lug' on the reverse side of the button that contacts the brass ribbon can be cracked, damaged, or worn too much; this can cause the button to be loose and prevent satisfactory contact. On the button in the photo below, a tiny hole was drilled and the trimmed-to-length shank of a large head round upholstery tack was driven into the center. Then super glue was poured around it to keep it fastened. Now the inside of the button has a good contact point for pushing on the brass ribbon switch.



With the parts ready, push the bare ends of the two horn wires into the inside of the wiring tube on the underside of the steering column. The other ends of those two wires will run to the firewall terminal block and the horn. Twisting the wires together when passing into the engine compartment makes a neater appearance.



The next step is to trim the two wires and attach them to the switch contacts. Applying a bit of solder to 'tin' the bare wires makes it easy to form a loop to secure the wires under the attachment screws.



Now gently expand the switch housing and place it around the steering column, noting that the lower edge has the formed outlet for the wires coming from under the steering column. Position the wired switch contact into the spread-apart housing and gently align the two wires so they will pass out of the formed lower edge; otherwise, the wires can bind and keep the housing from closing completely around the steering column.



Now place the button over the end of the switch and into the housing's rim, as shown in the next photo. A helpful hint is to use a small tool with a shaft the size of the long bolt, like a punch, to align the switch to the holes in the housing. The switch has two matching holes that the long bolt must pass through and out of to secure the housing to the column.



While pinching the housing together and making sure the switch and button are in position, remove the alignment tool. The long bolt can be easily passed into the housing and fixed with the hex nut underneath.



The restored horn button is now mounted on the steering column. Attach the ends of the two horn wires to complete the install. The longer wire goes to the horn positive (+) terminal. The shorter wire is placed under the screw at the firewall terminal of the generator/ammeter wire (+) (yellow/black tracer) for the 6 volt DC horn; or at the magneto terminal (red wire) (+) for the magneto AC horn.



Tech Editor Correction:

March/April 2018 *Installing Manifold Gland and Ring Gaskets*
An incorrect number of glands and rings was listed in this article as 8 each, or a total of 16. The correct number is a total of 12 - 4 (each) glands and rings for the exhaust, and 2 (each) glands and rings for the intake. Thanks to member Robert Kapela for noticing this error.

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