

LATCH HANDLE RELOCATOR KIT FOR 80-86 FULLSIZE FORD PICKUPS

This kit changes the tailgate latch handle to operate the tailgate latches from inside, or front face, of the tailgate. This modification requires cutting and drilling on the tailgate. The suggested procedure is as follows.

1. Take tailgate off the truck and remove the handle, latches, and rods. The latches will be used but the handle and rods will be replaced with new parts provided in the kit.
2. Use the paper template as a guide for locating the area to be cut out on the front face, or inside surface, of the tailgate. Align the outlines on the paper template to the embossed ribs on the tailgate and to the top of the tailgate. Hold the paper flat even though the tailgate surface is curved. Secure it with masking tape.
3. Center punch through the paper to mark the four corners of the area to be cut out as noted on the paper template. Remove the paper template and use a felt marking pen to draw four straight lines connecting the center punched corners of the area to be cut out. This is the outline of the area to be cut out for the new handle mechanism. The opening is 5-3/4" wide and 4" tall.
4. Using a suitable saw, grinder, or perhaps a plasma cutter, cut out the rectangular opening marked in #3 above. The curved surface makes this difficult and a small grinder may be needed to smooth the opening.
5. Temporarily assemble the handle mechanism into the adapter panel. Lay the assembled adapter panel handle over the opening in the position it will be mounted. The adapter panel should fit over the embossed pattern of the tailgate and match the shape of the tailgate. Check that there is clearance around the handle mechanism and that it will operate freely without rubbing the sheet metal. While holding the adapter panel in its correct position, center punch and drill for two screw holes diagonally opposite each other. Use a #24 or 5/32" drill.
6. Install the handle adapter panel using phillips screws in the 2 holes drilled in # 5. Carefully center punch for the remaining holes in the adapter panel. Drill the holes with the #24 or 5/32" drill, being careful not to drill the holes oversize. Remove the adapter panel from the tailgate and disassemble the handle mechanism and handle from the adapter panel.
7. Lay the tailgate on a worktable with the inside surface of the tailgate facing upward. Install the new rods on the original latches. Slide the rods and latches into the tailgate from the ends and bolt the latches in position. The tips of the rods should be visible through the opening cut in step #4 above. If not, use a wire or needle nose pliers to move the rod tips near the opening.
8. Position the new handle mechanism (not the handle) in the opening cut in step #4 above. The two attaching bolt holes should be down and the plastic clips retainers on the actuator arms should point toward the top of the tailgate. Lift the rod tips and insert them into the plastic retainers on the handle mechanism. Shift the rods in the retainers to obtain slight tension in the mechanism and both rods overlap the retainers equal amounts. Snap the retainers over the rods.

9. Pivot the mechanism on the rods (without releasing the retainers) so that the attaching bolt holes are facing upward and the actuator arms are pointed toward the bottom of the tailgate.
10. Insert the new handle into the adapter plate. The two 6mm studs should extend through the two holes in the handle opening.
11. Hold the plate and handle over the handle mechanism so that the two 6mm studs are aligned with the two bolt holes in the handle mechanism. Lift the mechanism partially out of the tailgate and insert the two 6mm studs into the two bolt holes in the handle mechanism. Carefully attach the mechanism to the handle and adapter plate using the two 6mm nuts and lock washers provided. Tighten with a 10mm wrench.
12. Lower the assembly into the opening in the tailgate. Verify that the adapter plate will mount smoothly on the surface of the tailgate and follow the embossed contours. Attach the plate with the four stainless phillips screws provided. Check that the handle and latches operate smoothly.

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This page reserved for tailgate template which is included with the tailgate handle relocater kit.