



**TOOL LIST FOR HIDDEN TAILGATE LATCHES  
FOR 53-87 FORD FLARESIDE TRUCKS**

Vise Grip Clamps – C-clamps

Sharpie Marker

Ball Peen Hammer

Center Punch

3/8" or 1/2" Drill

3/16", 3/8" and 1/4" Drill Bits

Masking Tape

Small High Speed Cutter/Wheel

Needle Nose Pliers

5/32", 1/4" and 3/16" Allen Wrenches

Tape Measure

5/8" hole saw **(this part is available from MAR-K separately, if needed).**

Round File

Small Flat File

1/2" Open-end Wrench

# MAR-K

RESTORATION AND CUSTOM PICKUP PARTS

## INSTALLATION INSTRUCTION FOR HIDDEN TAILGATE LATCHES ON 53-87 FORD FLARESIDE TRUCKS

1. Check the alignment of the tailgate to the bedsides. If necessary adjust the position of the tailgate hinges. We used a smooth tailgate for this installation but this kit will work for any stock style tailgate.
2. Support the tailgate in the horizontal open position. (Mar-K's link assembly kit has already been installed on this tailgate and is a nice compliment to the hidden latches.) Lay the template provided in the kit onto the tailgate's inner surface near the end. Measure down from the top curl of the tailgate 3-5/8" on the inside and line the 1/8" diameter holes in the template up to this dimension. Clamp the template in place.
3. Mark through the 1/8" diameter holes in the template. There are three holes on the flat surface and one hole on the vertical surface of the tailgate. Do this for both sides of the tailgate using the same template. The mark on the vertical part of the tailgate shown in the bottom photo should be 3/8" from the top flat edge of the tailgate. The top holes on the flat part of the tailgate should be at 7/16", 1-1/8", and 2-1/8" in from the vertical side edge of the tailgate.



- Center-punch the mark farthest in on the flat surface and drill a 3/16" diameter hole. You may want to use a drill stop so that the drill point does not damage the tailgate on the outside when it breaks through. Center-punch the other two marks and drill them with a 7/16" drill. It usually works better if you start with a small drill bit and work your way up to the 7/16" diameter.



- Place masking tape along the sides of the two 7/16" diameter hole to create a cutting guide as shown. Using a small high speed cutting wheel, connect the two 7/16" diameter holes by cutting the metal out between them. This will create the slot that the knob on the latch will slide in. Before finishing the second cut, grab hold of the scrap metal with pliers and keep it from falling inside the tailgate end.



6. Clean up any burrs from the opening and straighten the sides of the slot if necessary with a file.



7. Center-punch the mark on the vertical surface of the tailgate. This mark should be 3/8" down from the flat surface of the tailgate. This is where the hidden latch barrel will slide into the tailgate end. You need to drill a 5/8" diameter hole on this mark. We used a 5/8" hole saw to drill this hole. Depending on the tailgate you are using, you may have to tilt the drill upward to keep the hole saw from cutting into the tailgate end that wraps around the bed side when shut. The tailgate in the photo did not require this. Deburr the hole when finished.



8. Slide the latch sleeve into the tailgate through the 5/8" hole until the small threaded hole lines up with the small hole in the tailgate. Don't push too far or the latch barrel may fall inside the tailgate end. If this happens, it will be very difficult to remove. We used a round rod to hold the latch barrel while inserting it. Thread the 10-32 button-head screw through the tailgate into the latch sleeve and tighten with the supplied 1/8" hex wrench. Check the alignment of the slot in the tailgate with the slot in the latch sleeve.



9. Install the spring into the hollow part of the plunger and slide it into the latch sleeve. A liberal amount of your favorite grease on the plunger is recommended before final assembly.



10. Push in on the plunger and position the aluminum knob with the stainless shoulder screw. Thread the screw into the plunger and tighten the screw with the 1/8" hex wrench.



11. Test the movement of the plunger by sliding it back and fourth. Also pull the plunger all the way back and twist the knob to lock it in the retracted position. If the knob rubs on the tailgate or will not retract far enough to lock, you will need to enlarge the slotted hole in the tailgate with a file until full movement is obtained.



12. Once the latches are installed on both ends of the tailgate, make sure both latches are retracted and shut the tailgate. Hold the tailgate in a vertical position. Observe where the hidden latch plunger will hit the bed side when released. Place a strip of masking tape in this area.



13. Release the latches by twisting the knobs. The latches have a pointed tip that will mark the masking tape for the vertical position of the latch hole to be drilled in the bed side.



14. Lower the tailgate and support it in the open position. Measure forward from the rear edge of the bed side 7/16" and draw a line. Where the vertical line and horizontal mark from the latches intersect, you need to drill a 7/16" diameter hole. Again, it is better to start with a small drill and work up to the 7/16" diameter to ensure a more uniform round hole. If you have access to a step drill, these tend to make perfectly round holes in sheet metal.



15. Insert the supplied rubber grommets into the bedside holes.  
Close the tailgate and release the latches into the grommets.

You have successfully installed the hidden tailgate latches. During final assembly, be sure to use a quality thread locking compound on all threads.



Another Outstanding Part Manufactured in Oklahoma City, USA by



©Copyright 2008 MAR-K Quality Parts L.L.C. All rights reserved.