

MG TC/TD/TF Top Kit Installation Hints and Instructions

Parts Enclosed: Sewn Front Bow Cover
4 Foot Hidem Strip
Hidem Tips and 2 Chrome Screws
2 Dot Snaps with Sockets and Studs for Rear Lower Area of Rear Curtain
Sewn Top Cover

Before installation, please check to be sure this is the correct top kit for your car and there aren't any missing or damaged parts. If installation has been started, the top kit may not be returned for credit unless there is an obvious defect in workmanship.

Pre-installation tips: Familiarize yourself with the way your existing top is installed, especially at front edge and bow cover. Compare with another car if possible as well.

After removing old top, check wood top rail for condition, and replace with one of our rails below if deteriorated.

Now would also be the appropriate time to refinish the top frame. Also check for bent or misshapen bows/frame, broken welds or damaged pivot rivets.

The three rear rail pieces at top of body tub should be inspected for condition, as the tension on them for a snug fit of a new top is important. Originally, tops were secured to these rails with flat head wood screws and counter sunk washers, which is the preferred method over tacks or staples.

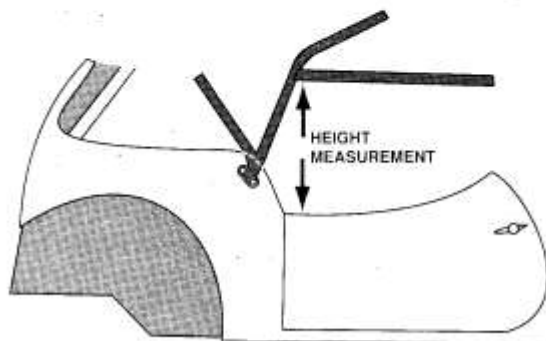


Figure #1

Finally the height of top frame is important for proper fit. Approximate setting measurements as shown in Figure #1 are as follows...

TC — 21 1/2"

TD 2 and 3 bow — 20 1/2"

TF — 19 1/2"

It is always best to locate the top frame in the exact original mounting holes. These are located approximately at the apex of the rear body elbow and immediately below the line of the hidem tacking strip. It is best to install the top frame without the rear interior trim panels in place to be certain of which holes are correct. Careful use of an awl and visual cross checking of the slightly pulled back interior trim panel will help insure that the final installation is correctly located.

An ideal work environment should be roomy, well lighted, and comfortably warm. Fitting a vinyl top can best be accomplished at room temperature, preferably in sunlight.

Optional top hardware available from Moss to assist in your installation:

453-230	Top Rail, Wood (over windshield) TC
453-240	Top Rail, Wood (over windshield) TD/TF
453-268	Tacking Strip Set, Wood (3 pc.) TC
453-278	Tacking Strip Set, Wood (3 pc.) TD
453-288	Tacking Strip Set, Wood (3 pc.) TF
323-858	Screw Set, Top to Tacking Strip, all
220-520	Paint, Top Frame, custom formulated to duplicate original tan color (12 oz. spray can)
386-890	"Durable Dot" Snap Installation Tool

Begin installation of top by wrapping front bow with the sewn cover in kit. With top partially raised, measure distance between top posts and cut or punch holes just behind seam of front flap. Place on top of windshield frame, bring top assembly down to windshield and secure with thumb screws. Center/check position of cover and begin to staple to bow from backside of windshield, pulling weather flap taut to front top of windshield frame. Start stapling in center and work out to within 4" to 6" of end of rail. Cuts will have to be made around main side frame and wing nut posts for proper fit. Finish off by pulling front portion of material up and overlap back piece just stapled. Begin in center and work out to the end of bow, carefully tucking and folding material at end of bow to finish off the weather-seal/bow cover.

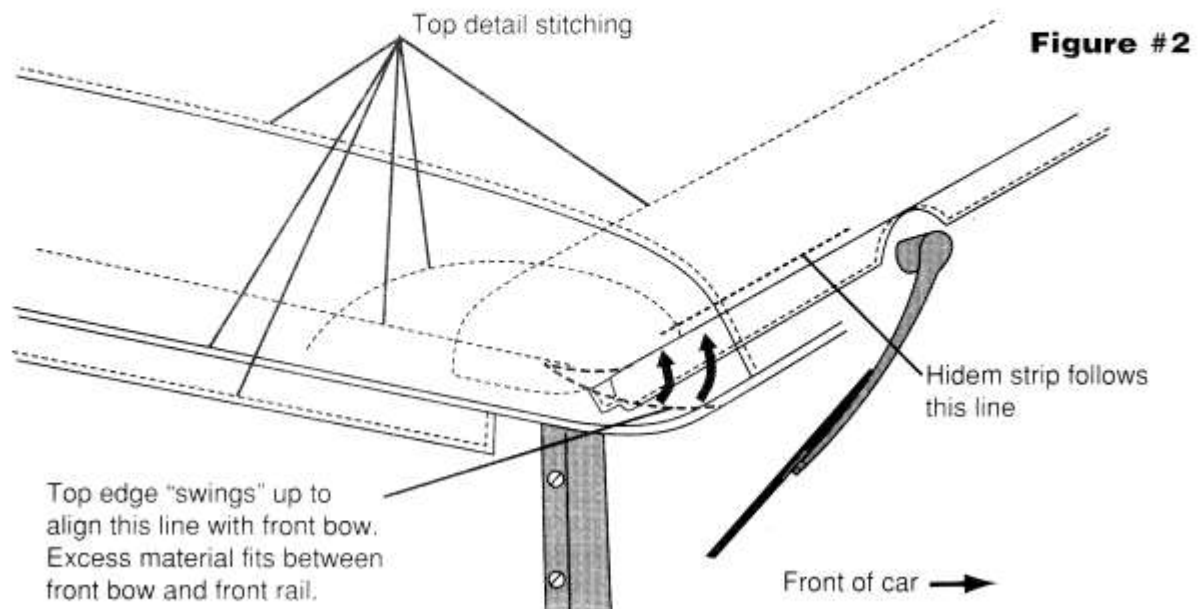
Before proceeding further, locate and mark position of screw holes in rear rails for attachment of securing strip sewn on top (a 3" x 5" cardboard marking template is the easiest method to accomplish this). Start from center of car and work out to outer edge of body tub. Nine screws will be placed as such at 5" intervals, with the remaining two screws on each side going around ends of body tub set at 3". Before committing yourself by drilling the $\frac{1}{8}$ " pilot holes, lay top cover over frame and check for fit of securing strip. Adjust locations as needed, and drill all 13 holes.

Measure width of deck seam at front of top, locate and mark center-line on front bow cover, and mark seam width on bow cover as well. Loosen thumb screws on both sides of top and partially fold top to "relax bows". At this point, top straps can be installed to main bows with self tapping screws and trim washers under the screw protectors sewn into straps.

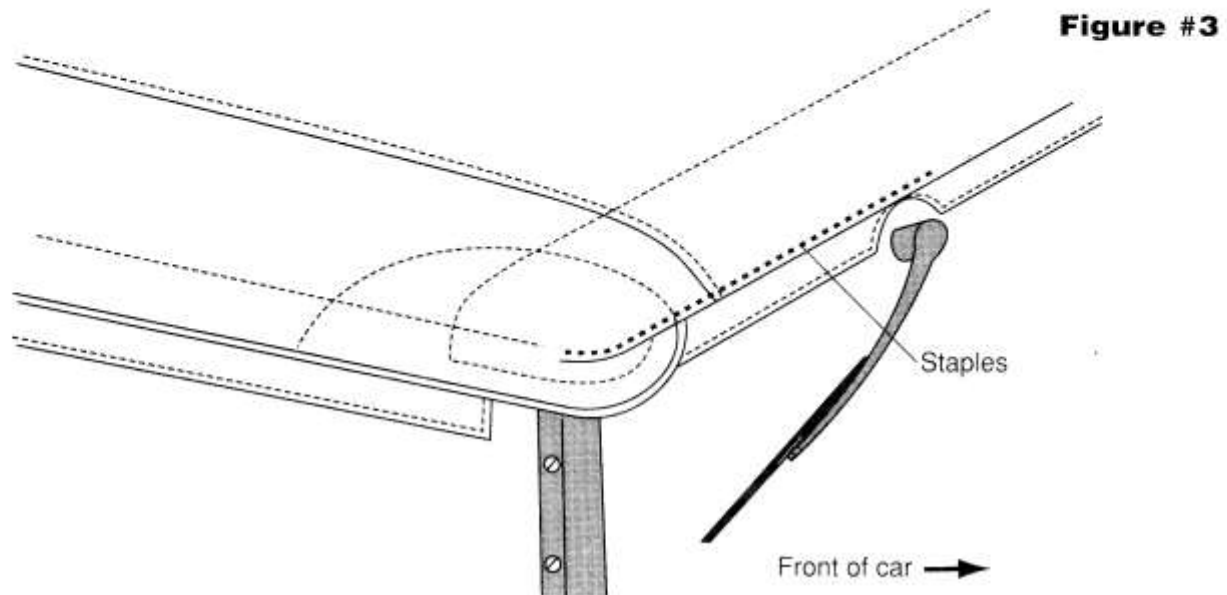
Resecure top bow to windshield and pull both straps taut to front bow, centering over deck seam marks. The front edge of strap (when trimmed and stapled to front bow) should fall short of leading edge by $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Temporarily position rear "floating bow" in place by rear reinforcement patch and pull strap down to rear cockpit rail. You will note that another hole will have to be drilled about 2" to the outside of the third screw from center to capture both sides of the strap. Note: when top is fully installed, this screw and washer will remain in place, but the screw and washer on inside edge will also pass through securing strip. It may assist you to temporarily position or hold rear bow in place by using masking tape.

Fold top cover in half and chalk the exact center of rear securing band and center of front deck. Place top on top frame, and with an awl, punch through the rear securing strip in center and screw to rear rail. Proper placement will put the bottom edge of securing strip just below top edge of body tub where it meets with rear rail. The screws and washers will be properly positioned in the lower third of this strip, visually, from the facing side of material. Working from side to side, pull top taut and install each screw and washer. As you near corners, it is a good idea to check fit of top at back edge of side curtains. Minimal adjustment of the installed screws can be accomplished without being noticeable. The front bottom edge of top will be held in place by the two Dot Snaps supplied. The screw stud should be located at the front edge of side rail pieces. You might want to pierce through top and temporarily hold in place with screw stud at this time.

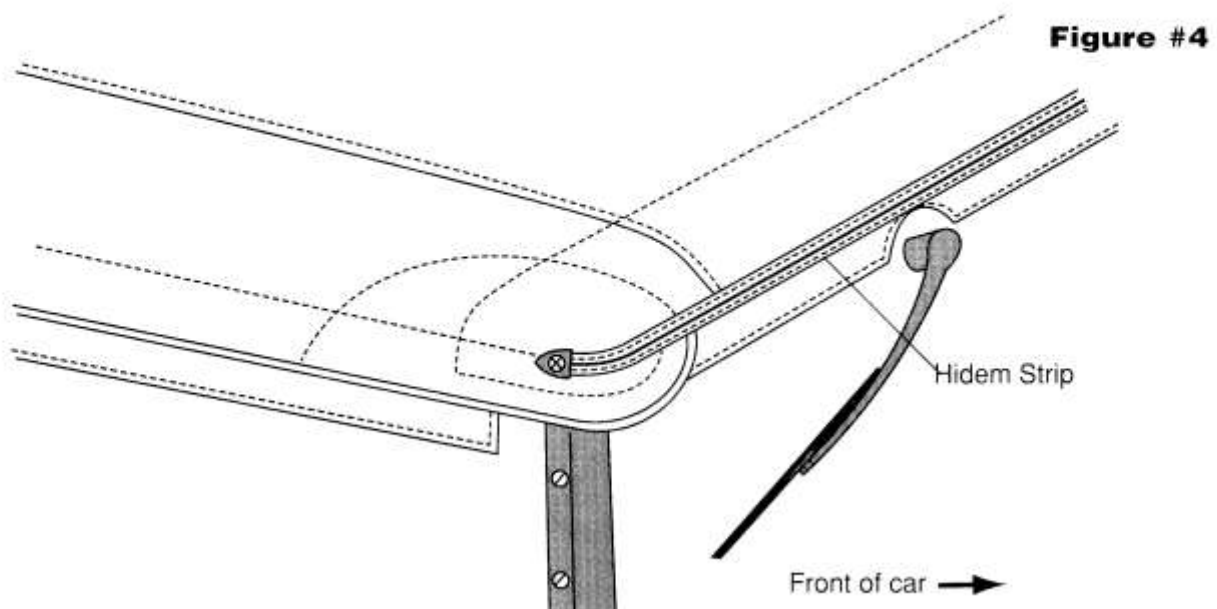
Reposition rear bow, if necessary, to register with seam joining rear curtain and front deck, before securing front of top cover to front bow. The preferred method of "basting" a top in place is to use #4 x $\frac{7}{16}$ " tacks driven halfway in (roughly 12 to 15 will trial-fit a cover to front bow). Center the top cover on front bow, aligning marks made previously. Pull top forward over front bow, stretch tight and temporarily "set" in place, beginning in center by placing three tacks or staples if you prefer. Before proceeding further, check overhang side to side at front corners, making sure it is uniform. The construction of your top material is such that it has "stretch" to some degree from a side to side pull. Bear this in mind, as a firm diagonal pull to the outer edge of front bow will change the fit of your top, especially the approximate $\frac{1}{2}$ " overhang of side valance at front edge just below bottom of the front rail. Place the next two tacks or staples into both deck seams, pulling straight forward on top as stated in the prior sentence. The area in-between deck seam and center-line can now be filled in. As you proceed to pull and tack top, check fit over side curtains (if in place) and overall appearance of cover. It will no doubt be necessary to adjust/retighten center deck as you finish off ends. A properly installed top will have roughly $1\frac{1}{2}$ " of material trimmed off front edge to be correctly done.



The most difficult area of the top to finish off is the two front outer corners. Due to the design of '40s and early '50s cars, this is particular to only a small group of automobiles. Figure #2 best illustrates the technique used where a compound curve is encountered on a top, where the side valance falls below the front bow line. A little patience, study of the diagram, and practice folding of the material will enable you to carry out the fit of this area. To set corner in place, grasp side valance with your whole hand just behind front bow and pull firmly forward. With other hand, "swing" material up and temporarily tack in place at binding line, set over the rest of top material. At this point, go back to center and retighten or adjust any looseness in the top cover. Work top to each side, stopping just past deck seams. Any wrinkles created by pulling the corners tight may be worked out in this process.



To final fit both corners, each side will need to have the temporary tack removed, and a "V" cut will be taken out of corner to remove excess material. "Swing" material back up, this time underneath the front edge of top, securing at inner end right on binding edge. Finish off end by overlapping with the remaining 4" or so of material outward of deck seam. If a little pucker appears at outward corner, it can be worked down with an awl and will be covered by the Hidem strip.



Trim off all excess material just above bottom edge of front rail, providing you are satisfied with overall fit of the top cover. The Hidem strip goes on next, which can be installed quickly and professionally if you follow this procedure:

Start at one side of car, with the placement of the end one inch in front of back edge of front bow. Secure with three or four staples and stretch tight to opposite side of car, placing three or four staples to hold at this end. Going back to first side, fill in all the way across front of car, placing bottom edge of Hidem even with the bottom edge of front bow (see Figure #3). The pointed ends of Hidem Tips should terminate $\frac{1}{2}$ " in front of back edge of front rail. Pre-drilling the screw hole for Hidem Tip with a $\frac{3}{32}$ " drill bit will ensure that splitting the front rail is not a concern. Finished top front should resemble Figure #4.

Final details are to install both Dot Snaps at back bottom corners, and to install screws and trim washers through top seam on rear bow, and readjust top strap tension at rear of car.

Check position of rear bow to insure that it is positioned directly under deck seam. Dot snaps can now be installed on the bottom back corners. Rear curtains should be fitted prior to committing to exact snap location. To simplify your job, our "Durable Dot" snap installation tool is available under Moss #386-980. Lastly, note that there is likely to be slack in top straps from last stationary bow and also from rear bow to rear rail. Remove the two screws at rail and pull straps taut, the original screw holes in straps will just come even or fall below bottom edge of top. Repunch and secure each strap one at a time for proper support of rear half of top and rear curtain, trim off excess tail of strap even with bottom edge to finish. Final step will be installation of both machine screws in the rear bow. An awl will assist in putting a hole through top strap and top cover. This hole, by the way, is drilled at quite an angle, which can be deceiving to you. To prevent tear-out, this screw MUST go through seam joining top deck with rear curtain. Before committing yourself to punching these two holes, a pair of screws pushed up from backside of top material will tell you if the locations are equal distance of the side seams running front to back where the top deck joins the side valances. The top may be pulled slightly from side to side to adjust if necessary. When satisfied with the positioning, punch holes, install screws, and enjoy your efforts.



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