Moss Motors P/n 451-795 MG TD Under-dash Panel Kit

Introduction: The M.G. factory originally installed an under-dash panel in MG TDs to neatly hide the wiring and cables and – possibly – to help reduce engine noise and heat in the cockpit. The original panels were made of a compressed paper material, reinforced with wood battens to add strength and help retain the shape of the panel, as well as providing a platform for the side mounting brackets. Brackets attached the panel to the edge of the dashboard and the body timbers where the bulkhead attaches to the body tub. Inevitably, in over half a century most of these panels have been removed and re-installed so many times that they have been broken due to the inherently flimsy nature of the material. Many were discarded simply because they were such a fiddle to remove and reinstall.

Now, TD owners seeking to restore their cars to as close to original specification as possible can restore the interior of their car with an under-dash panel made from a modern material which is much easier to work with and much less susceptible to fracture. Such is the strength of our new product that battens are not required; they were never visible on the originals after installation so you won't need to worry about losing points in a concours d'elegance; rare is the judge who will ask you to remove the panel so he can inspect the upper side! Our material is also sufficiently rigid that it does not need brackets at the sides. It will stay in place when resting on the battery box lip and secured to the edge of the dashboard.

Special Note: TDs originally had a projecting lip on the cockpit side of the lower edge of the battery box, where it hangs in the cockpit above the transmission. We have encountered several cars where the battery box has been reconstructed after the original rusted out, and this lip is missing. If your TD has no lip, the following instructions will show you how you can easily install a (very necessary) ledge which will perform the same function,

Installation Instructions

Your 451-795 includes a pre-cut panel and bags containing metal brackets and mounting hardware. The panel will fit left-hand drive and right-hand drive cars as it can be installed either way up. Two angle brackets and long machine screws and nuts are included just in case you want to fit the side brackets and battens, as original.

1. Remove your steering wheel by undoing the chrome clamp below the chrome spring cover and cap, then withdraw the wheel and the splined shaft far enough that you can pry out the oval woodruff key which locates the shaft in the inner column. Then pull the shaft completely out of the inner column. If your car is one of the rare TDs with a non-adjustable column, remove the screw holding the centerpiece in the wheel, lift out the centerpiece, undo the securing nut, then pull the wheel off the tapered end of the shaft.

2. Undo and remove the bolt which secures the outer column clamp to the Y-shaped bracket which hangs from the inner bodywork. Push down on the column so the clamp comes free from the bracket.

3. *TDs fitted with turn signals at the factory originally had the switch mounted on a bracket behind the lower edge of the dashboard. The switch sat vertically on the bracket and the handle faced forwards. If your car has such a switch, remove the handle and unscrew the nut holding the switch to the bracket. Rest the switch and its wires on the wiring at the back of the dashboard so it is up out of the way. Record the position of the hole in the bracket relative to the edge of the dashboard, and then unscrew the bracket from the back of the dashboard. You will not re-use this bracket as the switch will mount through the new panel. Any other switches, gauges, etc., that may be mounted below the edge of your dashboard should also be removed at this time.*

4. Look down in the footwell and make sure that the wiring harness and cables are pushed up as high as possible. The panel needs to be able to rest on the lip on the lower face of the battery box and hide everything above it without interference. If your battery box does not have a lip on it, purchase a 1-foot length of ½" square wood dowel (or aluminum ½" angle material) and screw (or pop-rivet) this to the battery box so that the upper edge is ¾" above the bottom of the battery box face**. Be sure to move the battery forward before doing this, so you do not drill into it!** If you use a wood dowel, attach it with countersunk machine screws (and nuts) passing forward so the panel can easily slide up past the wood when you install it. However, be sure the other ends of the screws are trimmed short so they do not interfere with the battery.

5. Carefully slide the panel under the dashboard, above the steering column and down into the footwell. This is done most easily by inserting it at an angle, pushing the driver's side in first, then straightening it when the side cut-out reaches the tube of the frame hoop. Then work it in and up till the other cut-out fits around the other tube. Check the fit against the kick panels. Depending on how these panels were installed, you may find that the edges of the under-dash panel have to be trimmed slightly; mark with chalk where this needs to be done. Position the panel so the big cut-out sits on the battery box lip. If the panel will not go far enough forward to sit on the lip, trimming around the frame hoop cut-outs may be necessary. Push upwards so that the Y-clamp fits down through one of the two holes in the panel, then hold the panel up to the lower edge of the dashboard. When installed, it will be just touching the back side of the inner dash panel.

Note: While this new panel has been designed to follow the shape of the original as closely as possible, some trimming of the edges and the cut-outs where it fits around the frame hoop (and around the sides of the battery box, if this has been remanufactured) may well be needed. Be patient while you make your trial fits and cuts, remove and re-install the panel carefully so as not to damage it, and you will (sometimes soon, sometimes eventually) achieve a really good fit.

6. *From the note you made in step (3) mark the location of the hole needed for your turn signal switch. Withdraw the panel and using the oval hole in the switch bracket as a guide, with an Exacto blade or similar very sharp tool carefully cut the hole for the turn signal switch. It is important to make the hole oval so the switch cannot rotate when the lever is pushed sideways to operate the switch.*

7. With the panel sitting in place and the front edge pressing against the back of the dashboard, take the three flat brackets and, using your bench vise and a hammer, carefully bend them so that they will lie flat against the panel and the underside of the inner dashboard. The bend should be midway between the two holes at the end of the bracket and the first of the two holes further in on the bracket; note that the countersunk hole must face down. Then, with a Sharpie or similar marking pen, "dot" the holes on the panel where each bracket will go. (The bracket locations are shown on the accompanying sketch.) Remove the panel, drill the holes you marked and install the brackets on the visible face of the panel, using the short-countersunk machine screws and nuts.

8. Install the panel in the car for the last time, making sure the big cut-out rests on the battery box lip. *Before screwing the front brackets in place, mount the turn signal switch through the panel and fit the securing nut and handle.* Now you can screw each of the three brackets to the edge of the dashboard with the wood screws provided. Position the steering column clamp correctly on the column, push it up into the Y-bracket, insert the bolt, adjust the height to suit and tighten the nut and bolt. Replace the steering wheel, reversing the steps in (1) above, and you're done!