SIDE CURTAIN COVERING KITS for MG TC, TD & TF

Background Information

The hoods (tops) and side curtains for all MG TCs, TDs, and TFs were originally produced by the Coventry Hood & Sidescrren Company and were supplied fully finished to the MG Factory at Abingdon. Even the hood was fully attached to the top frame and only needed to be screwed into position at the MG factory. This system, though very efficient, resulted in less than a perfect fit and was part of the reason that the term “Rag Top” was universally understood.

Experience has proven beyond doubt that the original side curtain frames did vary to a certain extent and in the case of TDs and TFs, the mounting position of the side curtain fixing plates also varied. Reproduction frames have also been produced for many years by numerous makers, which increases the chances for ill fitting weather equipment. During our careful examination of genuine new old stock factory covers we could clearly see the pencil line under certain critical stitch lines that were part of the manufacturing process and always insured consistent accuracy of the covers. Moss utilizes these same manufacturing techniques and our patterns are identical to factory originals. In essence, the variability is in the frames and the fit to the body, not the covers themselves. A better fitting side screen can only be achieved by custom trimming.

Careful study of period factory photos clearly shows that even when brand new and photographed for publicity purposes, the side screens never fit perfectly. These cars were not built to be water or airtight! They also were not Bentleys!

By carefully reading and understanding the following instructions, it should be possible for the patient amateur to achieve factory original standards of fit.

Conceptual Overview

We suggest that you purchase the top and side curtain kits at the same time since colors/shades will vary between production runs, even though the material is ordered for our upholstery shop from the same supplier.

Side curtains frames should ideally be covered only after the convertible top or “hood” has been successfully and correctly installed. The single most common error in installing new tops/hoods is in incorrectly locating the top frame to the body tub. The top frame should always be installed in the original holes in the body tub. This typically becomes a bit of a challenge as new interiors generally precede new hoods. By careful examination of original wood, it should be possible to determine which holes are truly correct and then by using simple “line of sight” triangulation methods and the use of an awl, correct frame positioning can be assured.

These instructions are not complete, and for that we apologize. However, they are at a point where we feel the information contained is valuable enough to include them with our side curtain frames and side curtain covering kits. As we compile new information and photographs, we will revise and expand the material in the instructions. We hope that you will find the information useful, and we welcome your suggestions on how we might improve these instructions.

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Part 1 - Identifying What You Have

Moss Motors supplies a variety of side curtain kits and this documentation will help you make sure you have the right bits for your car before you begin. Please remember, once you cut, trim tweak or fit a piece of upholstery, it's yours. With the identification of the bits out of the way, we will take you through the process of fitting the side curtain covers to the frames to achieve satisfactory results regardless of which T Series car you have.

The current listing of available "Side Curtain Kits" appears below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appl / PN</th>
<th>Search Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MG TC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>257-188</td>
<td>Side Curtain KIT, OE TYPE CANVAS DUCK</td>
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<tr>
<td>243-778</td>
<td>Side Curtain KIT, STAYFAST, BLACK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243-788</td>
<td>Side Curtain KIT, STAYFAST, TAN</td>
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<tr>
<td>MG TD W/ 2 BOW TOP FRAME</td>
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<tr>
<td>257-178</td>
<td>Side Curtain KIT, OE TYPE CANVAS DUCK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243-798</td>
<td>Side Curtain KIT, STAYFAST, BLACK</td>
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<tr>
<td>243-788</td>
<td>Side Curtain KIT, STAYFAST, TAN</td>
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<tr>
<td>MG TD W/ 3 BOW TOP FRAME</td>
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<tr>
<td>257-188</td>
<td>Side Curtain KIT, OE TYPE CANVAS DUCK</td>
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<tr>
<td>243-826</td>
<td>Side Curtain KIT, STAYFAST, BLACK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243-816</td>
<td>Side Curtain KIT, STAYFAST, TAN</td>
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<tr>
<td>MG TF</td>
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<tr>
<td>257-198</td>
<td>Side Curtain KIT, OE TYPE CANVAS DUCK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243-848</td>
<td>Side Curtain KIT, STAYFAST, BLACK</td>
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<tr>
<td>243-838</td>
<td>Side Curtain KIT, STAYFAST, TAN</td>
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Each kit should come with a detailed breakdown of the components to facilitate communication.

The complete kits (listed above) include:
- Four side curtain covers
- Four steel frames in gray primer, drilled for the side curtain cover hardware
- Polished stainless steel finishing strips with "spooned ends" please note that the finishing strips in all of our complete side curtain kits have "spoon" ends, correct for TD and TF. For TC owners who are die-hard purists or Concours enthusiasts, our "do-it-yourself" finishing strip kits include over-length strips which must be custom mitered to duplicate the originals.
- Special bolts with "T" heads, and nuts
Lay the side curtain frames on the ground as shown.

Things to look for:
1. The upper rear corner of the front frame is almost a 90 degree angle (1B)
2. The upper front corner of the rear frame is almost a 90 degree angle (1C)
3. The upper rear corner of the rear frame is angular, not rounded (1D)
4. The dropped section of the rear s/c frame (1E) is gently rounded.

The rear TC s/c frame is the only one with this rounded point.

To confirm the identity of the front frames:
1. On the front s/c frame, identify the upper horizontal piece. (1A)
2. Lay a tape measure along the inside edge of the upper horizontal piece.
3. Measure the length of the steel piece from outside to outside edge.
4. It should be 19 3/8 inches long. (about 21 inches would be TD, and over 22 is a TF)

If 1E is rounded as shown you can skip the measurements below.

To confirm the identity of the rear frames:
1. On the rear s/c frame, identify the lower horizontal piece. (1F)
2. Lay a tape measure along the inside edge of the lower horizontal piece.
3. Measure the length of the steel piece from outside to outside edge.
4. It should be 20 inches long. (about 17 1/2 to 18 1/4 inches would be TD, and less than 17 is a TF)
5. The metal strap used to make the lower pieces of the TC frames is flat (1G).
6. The material used to make the TD frames is actually like a small piece of angle iron.
7. The depth of the dropped point (1H) is 9 7/8 inches.
Lay the side curtain frames on the ground as shown.

Things to look for:
- The upper rear corner of the front frame is almost a 90 degree angle (2B)
- The upper front corner of the rear frame is almost a 90 degree angle (2C)
- The upper rear corner of the rear frame is angular, not smoothly rounded (2D)
- The dropped section of the rear s/c frame comes to a sharp point (2E)

To confirm the identity of the front frames:
- On the front s/c frame, identify the upper horizontal piece. (2A)
- Lay a tape measure along the inside edge of the upper horizontal piece.
- Measure the length of the steel piece from outside to outside edge.
- If it should be 22 5/16 inches long. (about 19 3/4 inches would be TC, and over 22 is a TF)
- Note: the distance between the top and bottom frame pieces (2K) is 9 1/2 inches.
- This same dimension on the corresponding side curtain frame for the 3 bow top is 10 3/4 inches.

To confirm the identity of the rear frames:
- On the rear s/c frame, identify the lower horizontal piece. (2F)
- Lay a tape measure along the inside edge of the lower horizontal piece.
- Measure the length of the steel piece from outside to outside edge.
- It should be 17 4/8 inches long. (about 20 inches would be TC, and less than 17 is a TF)

The depth of the dropped point (2H) is 7 3/4 from the bottom of the lower horizontal bar (2F) to the end of the point.
Lay the side curtain frames on the ground as shown.

Things to look for:

The upper rear corner of the front frame is a gently rounded, not quite 90 degree angle (3B)
The front side curtain frames for the TD with 3 bow top frame and the TF are very, very similar in
dimension. It is this corner (3B) that distinguishes them, because the equivalent corner on the TF frame is
almost 90 degrees. Please look at 4B on the next page and compare that corner to 3B above.
The upper front corner of the rear frame is almost a 90 degree angle (3C)
The upper rear corner of the rear frame is smoothly rounded, not angular (3D)
The TD 3 bow top s/c frames are the only ones with these 3 rounded corners.
The dropped section of the rear s/c frame comes to a sharp point (3E)

To confirm the identity of the front frames:

On the front s/c frame, identify the upper horizontal piece. (3A)

Lay a tape measure along the inside edge of the upper horizontal piece.
Measure the length of the steel piece from outside to outside edge.
It should be 22 5/16 inches long. (about 19 3/4 inches would be TC, and over 22 is a TF)

Note: the distance between the top and bottom frame pieces (3K) is 10 3/4 inches.

This same dimension on the corresponding side curtain frame for the 2 bow top is 9 1/2 inches.

To confirm the identity of the rear frames:

On the rear s/c frame, identify the lower horizontal piece. (3F)

Lay a tape measure along the inside edge of the lower horizontal piece.
Measure the length of the steel piece from outside to outside edge.
It should be 18 1/4 inches long. (about 20 inches would be TC, and less than 17 is a TF)

The length of the dropped point (3H) is 7 3/16 from the bottom of the lower horizontal bar (3F) to the end
of the point.
Lay the side curtain frames on the ground as shown.

Things to look for:
- The upper rear corner of the front frame is almost a 90 degree angle (4B).
- The upper front corner of the rear frame is almost a 80 degree angle (4C).
- The upper rear corner of the rear frame is angular, not smoothly rounded (4D).
- The dropped section of the rear s/c frame comes to a sharp point (4E).
- The mounting bracket welded to the frame at 4E points almost straight down.

To confirm the identity of the front frames:
- On the front s/c frame, identify the upper horizontal piece (4A).
- Lay a tape measure along the inside edge of the horizontal piece.
- Measure the length of the steel piece from outside to outside edge.
- It should be 22 5/16 inches long. (about 19 3/4 inches would be TC, 21 3/4 is a TD, over 22 is TF)

To confirm the identity of the rear frames:
- On the rear s/c frame, identify the lower horizontal piece (4F).
- Lay a tape measure along the inside edge of the lower horizontal piece.
- Measure the length of the steel piece from outside to outside edge.
- It should be 16 1/2 inches long. (about 20 inches would be TC, and 17-18 would be a TD)

The length of the dropped point (4H) is 6 15/16 from the bottom of the lower horizontal bar (4F) to the end of the point.

This concludes Part 1, Identifying What You Have.
Part 2 - Fitting the Bare Frames

Erect the hood (top). Do not fit the frames with the hood down!
Install new side curtain sockets in the holes in the arm rest section of the door top. Do not secure them solidly in the door. Besides possible damage to the paint, the sockets are intended to have some up and down adjustment.
In addition, the hole in the socket for the pin on the side curtain frame is eccentric, which allows some fine tuning by rotating the socket you can move the side curtain in or out slightly.

Positioning the Mounting Plates

Ideally, you have new upholstery panels in the cockpit and the old holes for the mounting plates are not there. If you reinstated the old mounting plates in the same place that they were, fitting the frames is going to be potentially more difficult. Aus the side curtains were used to determine the position of the mounting plate in the first plate. Attach the side curtain mounting plates to the forward leg of the front side curtain frame with the special "wing nut".
Position the frame with the pin in the socket in the door top, holding the front part of the frame up with your hand. The leading edge of the front frame should be parallel to the windscreen frame. Some bending of the frames may be required. Original frames were also slightly "bowed" front to rear.
Locate the side curtain mounting plates as you hold the bare side curtain frame in position. The mounting plate will be in the upper front corner of the door, very close to the hidem the goes around the edge of the door.

Secure the mounting plate with only one screw

You will need help with the next step, and you and your helper will need a good deal of patience
Hold the side curtain cover against the frame.
Please refer to Fig 6 & 7 below for detains on the alignment of the cover to the frame.
Check the fit and appearance of the cover from the outside and from inside the cockpit.
Check the alignment with the windshield frame.
Note that the leading edge of the side curtain should fit into the vertical channel on the windshield post.
Look at the top edge of the side curtain and make sure it fits into the flap of the convertible top.
Check the rear edge of the side curtain. It should be parallel with the rear edge of the door and overlap the rear side curtain slightly.
With the side curtain cover just where you want it, check the location of the stitch lines (Fig 6 & 7) one more time.

If you have already fitted the side curtain mounting plates you will have the frames will have to be tweaked and adjusted as necessary to fit the fixing brackets.

Only after bare frames have been fitted to the car should they be detailed out, primed, and painted. Moss offers spray paint in the correct shade of tan for the T-Series top and side curtain frames under 220-520.

The fit of the covers against the frames does not allow for significant adjustment but it is still wise to hold the uninstalled covers up against the frames while the frames are mounted on the car. This will help to determine if any further modification of the frames or mount position is required.
Part 3 - Side Curtain Cover Installation

A good clean work area is essential along with a sacrificial piece of clean plywood ideally at least as large as the largest side curtain cover.

Lay a front side curtain cover on the work surface, with the outer surface facing down.

Lay the frame over the cover.

Note the holes (6A) for the trim strip mounting hardware.

Locate the stitch line inset from the edge of the side curtain cover. (6B).

Carefully center the trim strip fixing bolt holes over the inner stitch line of the cover. (Fig 7A)

This stitch line should ideally lie directly under the center of each fixing bolt hole. (7B)

The frame position can be adjusted slightly but the stitch line must not extend into the “window area” (7C)

Total possible adjustment on an ideal frame is only approx. ‘½”. Only if necessary should the inner stitch line be visible outside of the frame. (7D)
If the stitch line does not begin to line up, it is most likely that the frames and the covering kits are not compatible.

TC, TD 2-Bow, TD 3 bow and TF side curtain frames are all similar but are most definitely not interchangeable.

If you encounter a problem at this point review Part 1, the frame identification section, and verify that you have the correct frames for your car.

With a light marking pen, mark for each hole and the inside edge of the window opening.

Remove the frame.

With a pair of sharp scissors, (or blade if using extreme caution) cut out the fabric covering to the line plus approximately 0.050”.

Do not cut into the Lexan clear window material!

Turn the cover over and trim out the center fabric to approximately the same dimensions plus a bit more to insure that the trim line will be fully covered by the chrome trim strips.

In principal, the trimmed edge of the fabric should ideally not show on the inside or outside once fully assembled.

Lay the marked cover on a piece of sacrificial plywood.

Drill out each marked hole on the trimmed-out cover using a 13/64” drill bit.

Carefully brush away residue to prevent it from scratching windows.

Cover can now be simply screwed together with the fixing bolts, nuts and trim strips.

TCs were originally fitted with trim strips with nicely fitting fully mitered corners. Each corner had a small “V” shaped corner guide, slipped into each corner. These corners were hand cut from alloy sheet or ridged plastic window material. Each strip was individually mitered. MOSS offers a “Do-it-yourself” strip kit but these require lots of patience. The standard “spoon end” strips are straight forward to install. The sixteen individual strips should be sorted by length and selected to give the best possible fit. It is necessary to apply a slight bow to the rearmost upper strip on the rear frames. This bend can be massaged into the strip by using hand pressure while holding the strip against a flat surface.

Snaps for front curtain fixing tabs should be positioned and installed only after the assembled curtain is offered up to the doors and correct snap location is determined. The snap studs were originally installed directly on top of the hidem at the top of the door panel.

Rear curtains are covered in the same fashion as described above but also require that the lower flap be riveted to the bottom section of the frame. Mark & drill for these holes only after the cover has been attached to the frame and trim strips have been secured.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the information, suggestions and assistance of Chris Nowlan and Lawrie Alexander who were instrumental in the development of these instructions.