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ACTUAL PARTS, YEARS AND BODY STYLES CONTAINED

IN THIS ARTICLE MAY DIFFER SLIGHTLY FROM YOUR APPLICATION. "

1955-57 UPPER MAST JACKET REBUILD



The 1955-57 cars have a mast jacket not a steering column; which means the steering shaft from the steering wheel to the steering box is part of the steering box and is

not removable. On later cars like an Impala or Camaro, the steering shaft is part of the steering column and is joined to the steering box with a flex coupler. The mast jacket on the 55-57's covers the steering shaft and can be removed without removing the steering box. At the top of the mast jacket, there is a bearing and a locking plate that locates the steering shaft in the center of the mast jacket. When either of these parts become worn or broken, the top of the mast jacket can become loose and sloppy causing the turn signal switch to work poorly, the gear shift lever to be sloppy and the steering wheel to seem loose. In this article we will rebuild the entire upper mast jacket. This procedure can be done with the mast jacket still in the car and the steering wheel removed. We have removed the mast jacket for photo purposes only.

Parts Needed:

- 53-22 1955-56 Upper Steering Column Rebuild Kit
- 53-23 1957 Upper Steering Column Rebuild Kit
- 22-09 1955-57 Turn Signal Switch W/Wires
- 53-21 1955-57 Upper Steering Column Bearing
- 53-24 1955-57 Turn Signal Actuating Ring
- 06-13 1955-57 Turn Signal Lever With Knob
- 06-60 1955-57 Column Shift Lever
- 06-65 1955-57 Column Shift Lever Spring
- 09-02 1955-57 Column Shift Lever Grommet
- 06-25 1955-57 Column Shift Lever Roll Pin
- 53-48 1955-57 Tounge Thrust Washer
- 53-49 1955-57 Notched Thrust Washer

Tools Needed:

- Phillips Screw Driver
- Hammer
- 3/4" Socket and Ratchet

Time Frame:

2 Hours

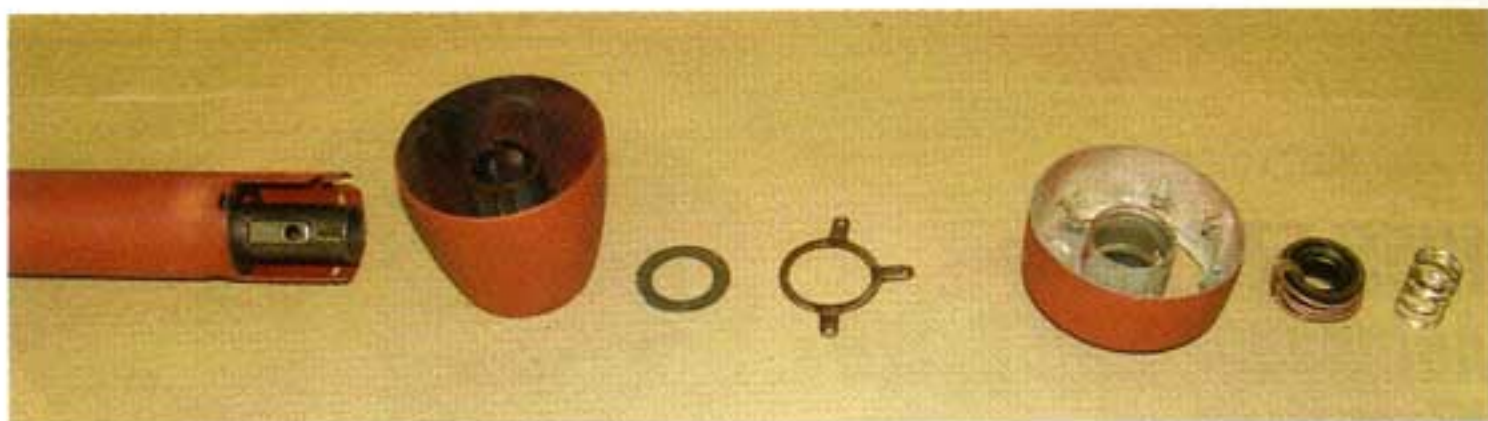


Photo #1: The upper mast jacket is made up of the turn signal housing, the shift collar, a thrust washer, the turn signal locking plate, the upper column bearing, a spring and a split washer that keeps a load on the upper bearing. This photo shows all the parts in the order of the assembly.

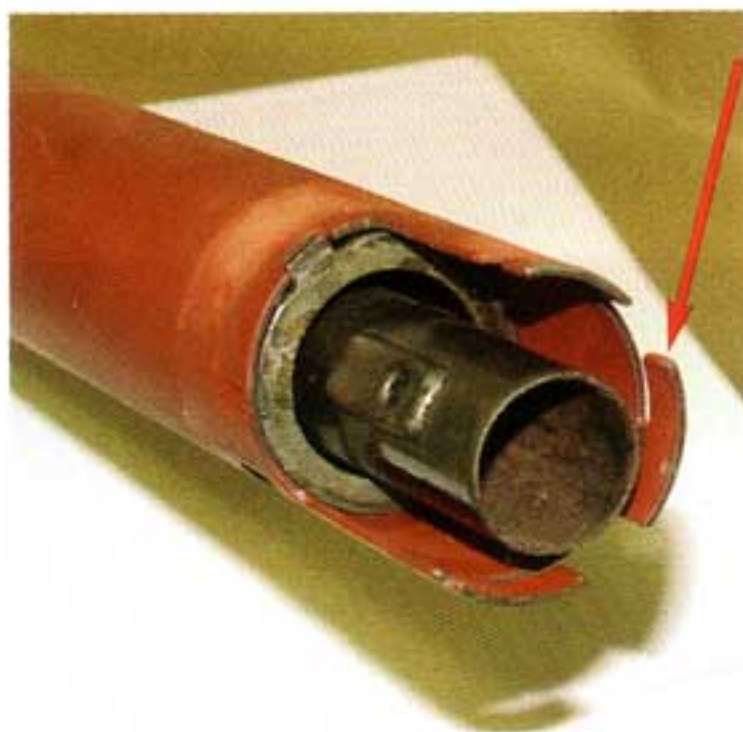


Photo #2: At the top of the mast jacket, there are three dog ears where the turn signal locking ring keys into. Make certain the ears are not worn, bent or broken. If any one of the ears are damaged, the turn signal locking plate will not hold the turn signal housing nor the shift collar tight to the mast jacket. First, the tongued thrust washer #53-48 must be installed into the mast jacket.

Photo #3: The shift collar will slide onto the shift tube and key into place. Use a small amount of grease on the shift tube to allow the shift collar to slide freely. Make sure the shift collar is slid down all the way.



Photo #4: Next install the notched thrust washer #53-49. Once again, use a small amount of grease on the top and bottom of the thrust washer.

Photo 5a



Photo #5a & 5b: A new turn signal locking plate is included in the upper steering column rebuild kit. The locking plate keys into the top of the mast jacket to hold the turn signal housing in place. This plate can only be installed in one direction.

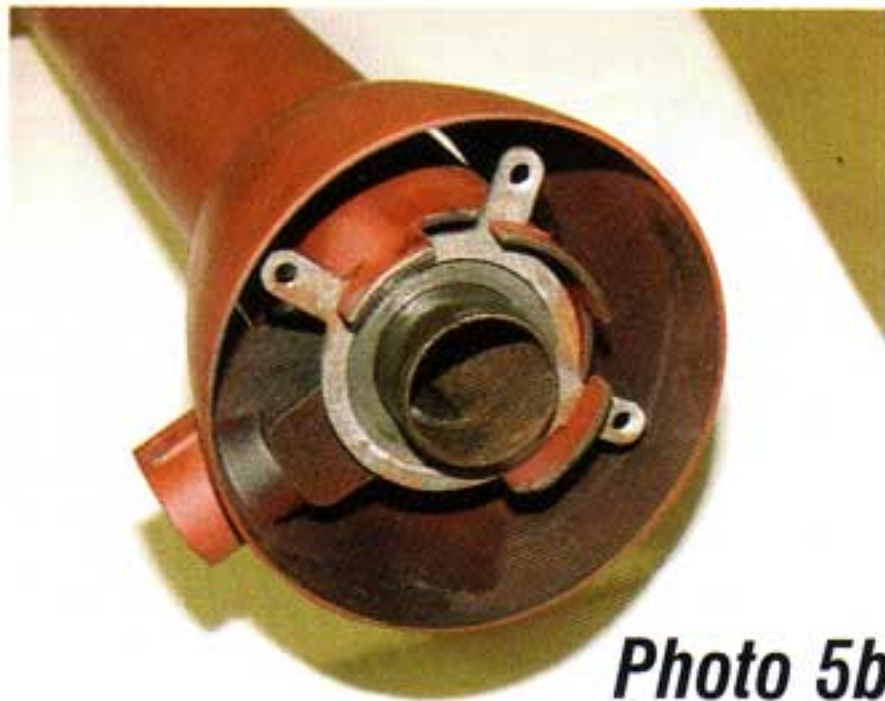


Photo 5b



Photo #6: Before installing the turn signal housing, be sure the turn signal switch and wires are in good working order. Replace if necessary. The turn signal switch #22-09 is held to the bottom of the turn signal housing with two #8 machine screws. There is a spring steel clip to keep them in place.

Photo #7: On 1955-56 cars use a piece of safety wire to tie the turn signal wires together and feed them down through the mast jacket, pulling them out the access hole on the left hand side of the mast jacket. This is not necessary on 1957 cars because the wires run down the outside of the mast jacket.

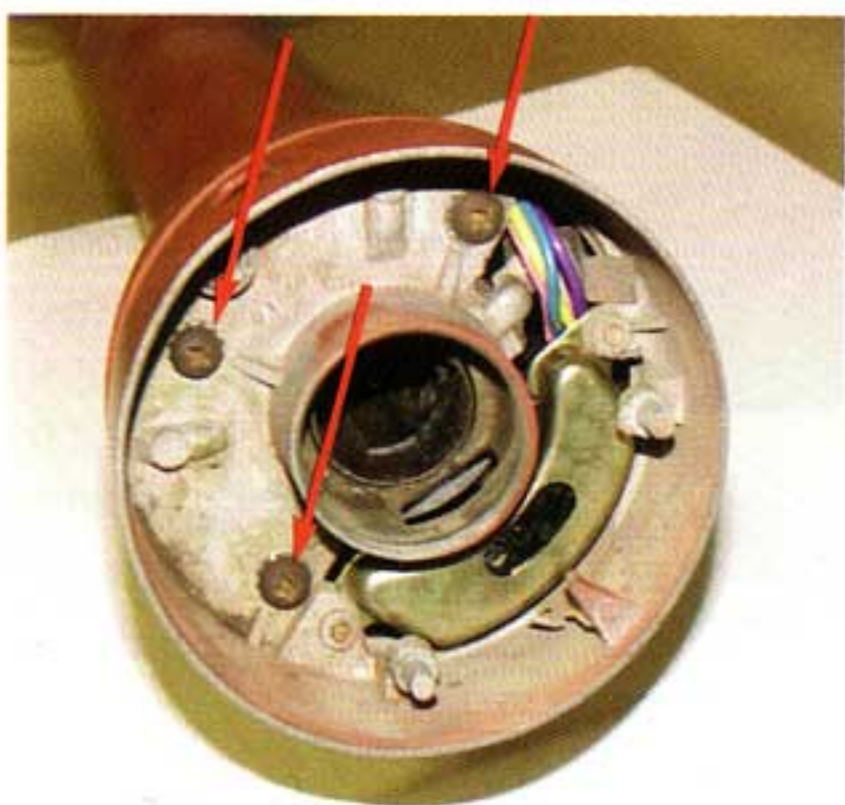
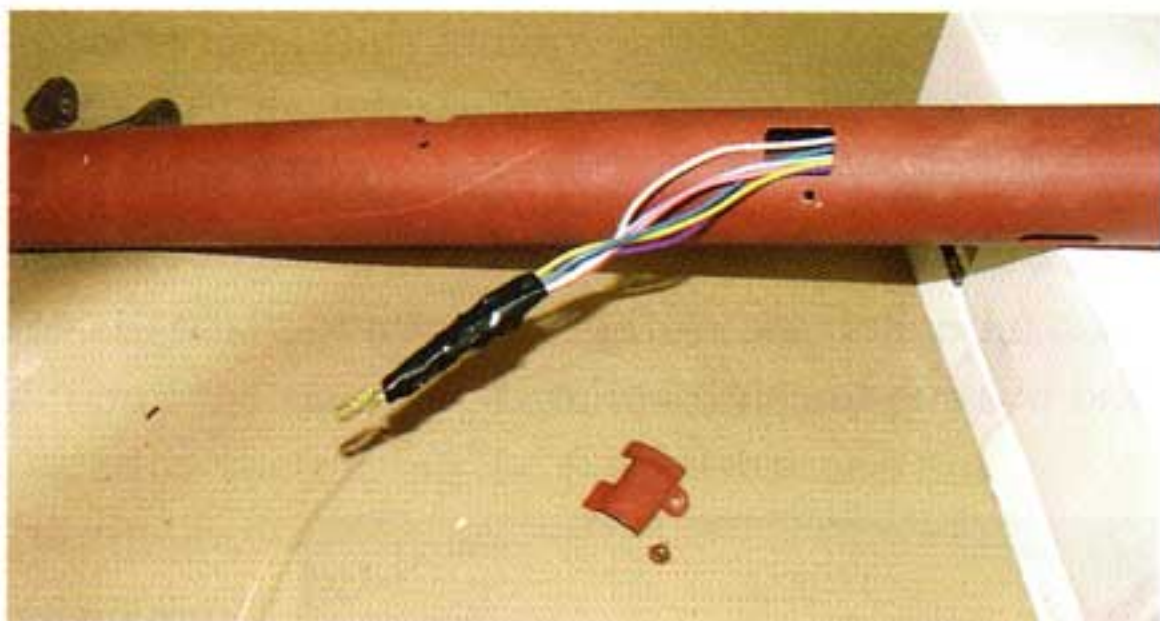


Photo #8: The turn signal housing will center up on the top of the shift tube. There are 3 #8 machine screws supplied with the upper steering column rebuild kit that hold the turn signal housing to the

locking plate. If the turn signal housing will not center up and drop into place, it may be necessary to wiggle the assembly up and down and side to side while applying pressure. You will feel it drop into place.



Photo 9a

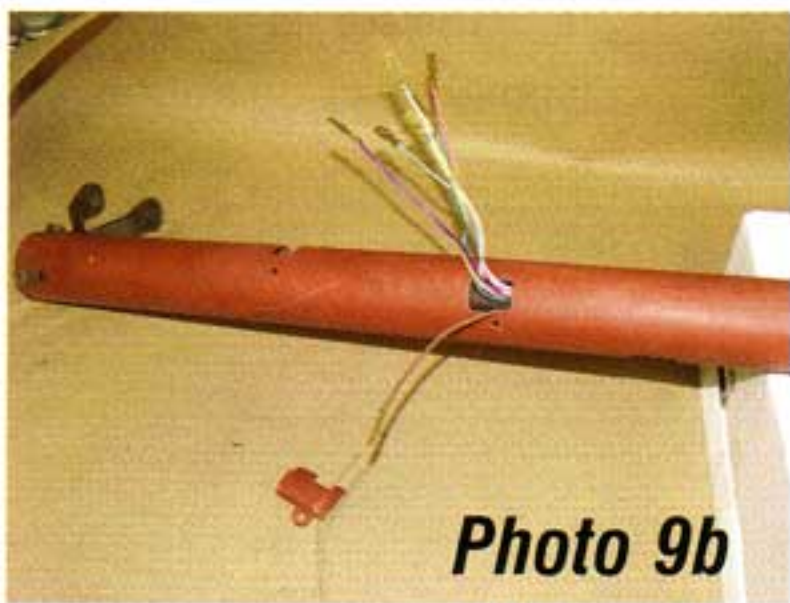


Photo 9b

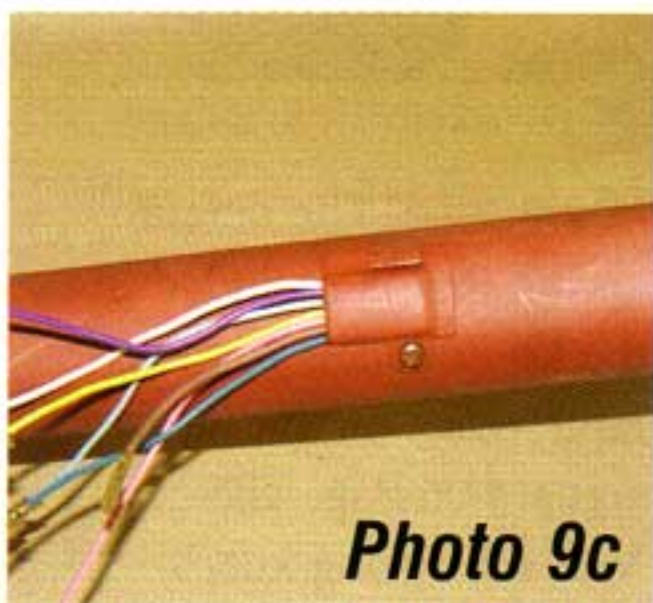


Photo 9c

Photo #9a & 9b & 9c : The upper steering column bearing and wire #53-21 fits into the upper part of the turn signal housing. On 1955-56 cars, the wire will need to be fed down through the mast jacket also. You may also install this bearing in the turn signal housing prior to step #8 if you wish.

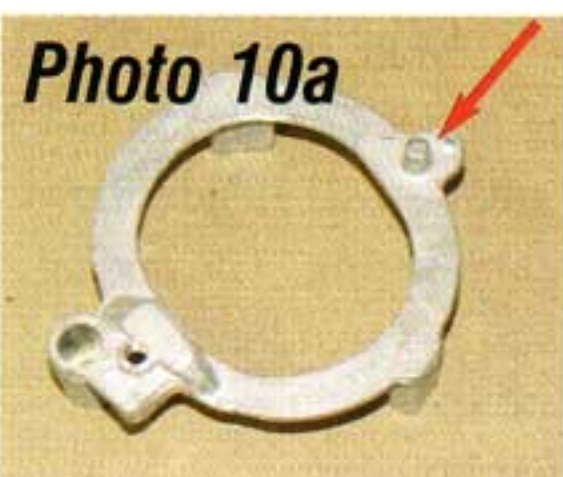


Photo 10a

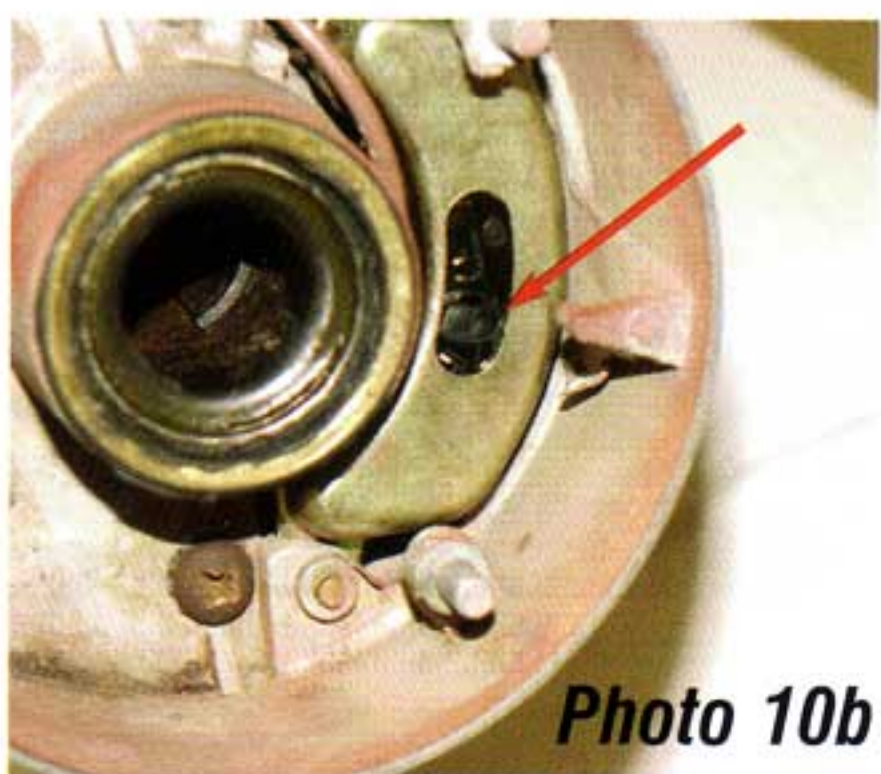


Photo 10b

Photo #10a & 10b: The turn signal actuating ring connects the turn signal lever to the turn signal switch. If the ring is bad use replacement #53-24. There is a pin on the bottom of the ring that keys into the turn signal switch.

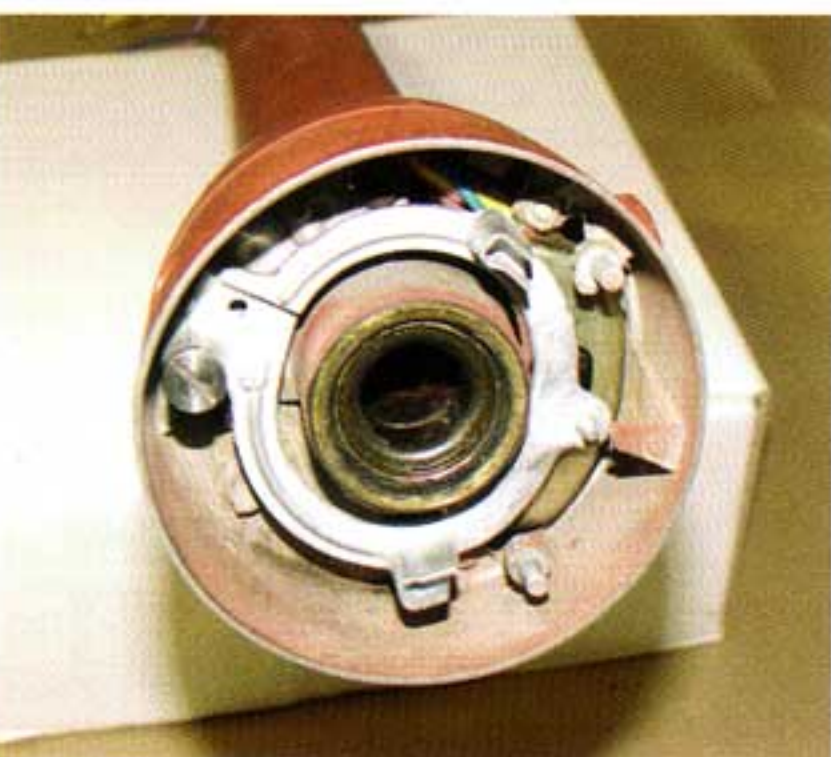


Photo #11: The actuating ring is held to the turn signal housing with a special shouldered pivot screw included in the rebuild kit. The screw will pass through the actuating ring, through a small lockwasher (very

important not to forget this washer) and screws into the turn signal housing on the left hand side of the mast jacket.

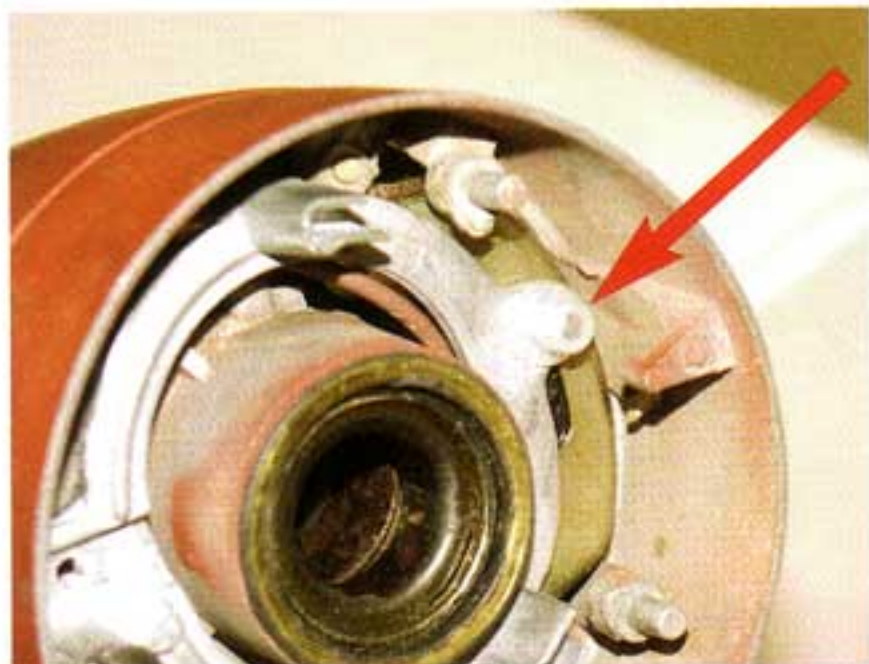


Photo #12: There is a clear nylon roller included in the kit that fits onto the pin on the right hand side of the actuating ring. This will allow the detent spring to slide smoothly making for easy turn signal lever operation.

Photo #13: The detent spring that is included in the kit connects to the two large posts on the turn signal housing. The center V-of the spring keeps tension on the actuating ring keeping the turn signal lever in place. Apply a small amount of grease to the nylon roller.

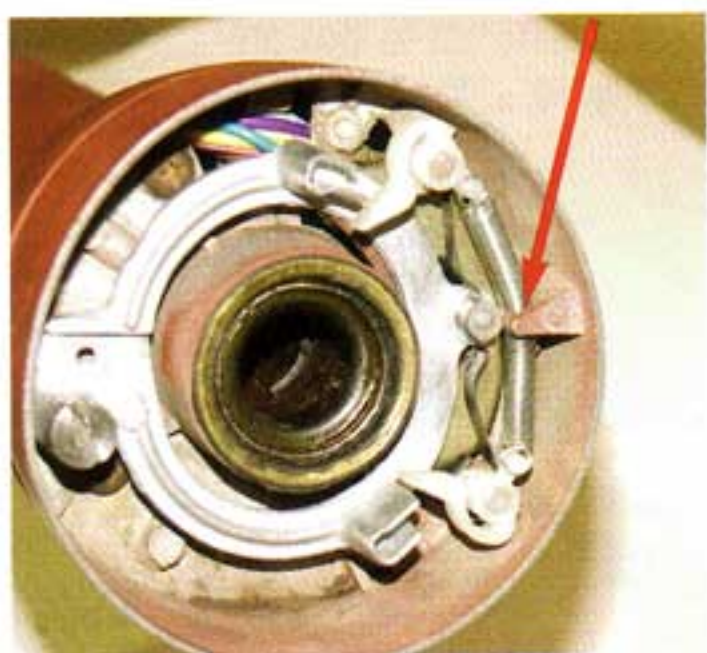
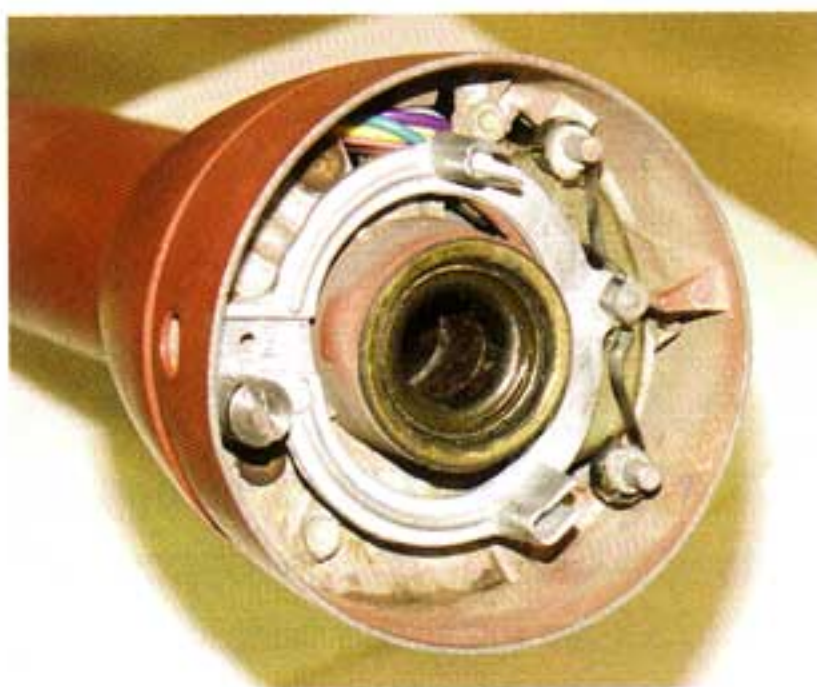


Photo #14: Mate the turn signal canceling pawls and spring to the two small posts inside the turn signal housing. The spring connects to the two pawls and fits behind the outer pin on the turn signal housing.

Photo #15: The rubber bumpers for the canceling pawls should be placed into the two female tabs on the actuating ring.

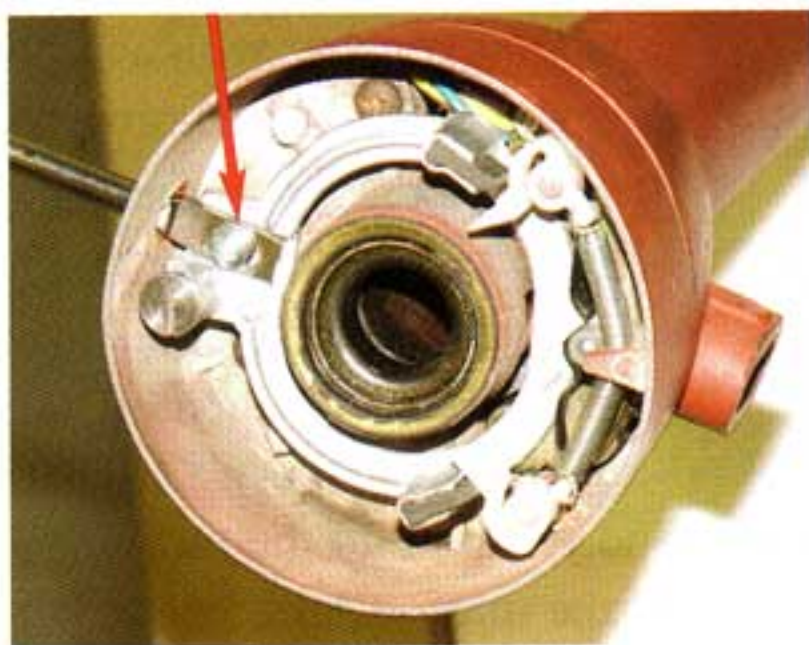
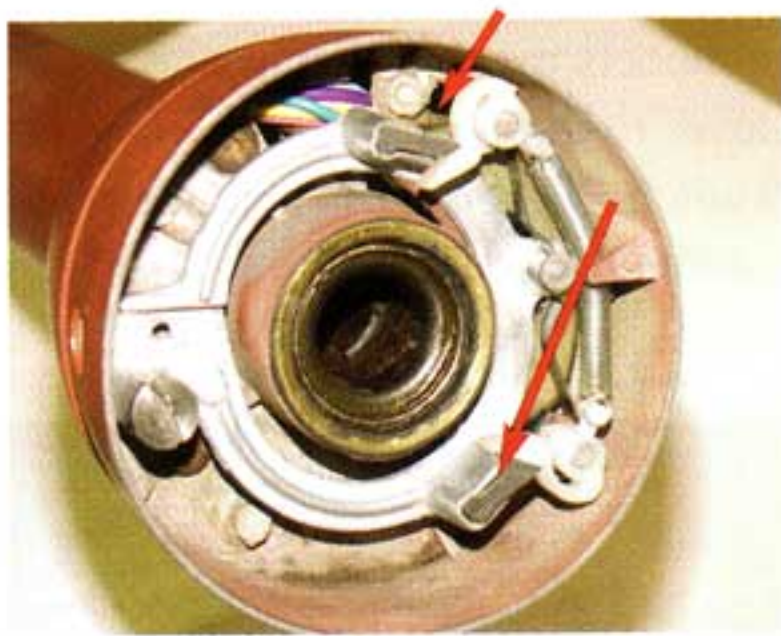


Photo #16: The turn signal lever #06-13 is held to the turn signal actuating ring with a #8 machine screw and lockwasher supplied with the kit.



Photo #17: The column shift lever #06-60 has a spring #06-05 at the bottom to keep tension on the lever. Place a small amount of grease on the tip of the lever and inside the hole where the roll pin will go.



Photo 18a



Photo 18b

Photo #18a & 18b: The column shift lever is held to the shift collar with roll pin #06-25. Slide the shift lever grommet #09-02 up onto the lever. Push the lever into the shift collar and install the roll pin, making sure the lever engages the hole in the inner shift tube. Pull the shift grommet into place to cover the roll pin and boss on the shift collar.

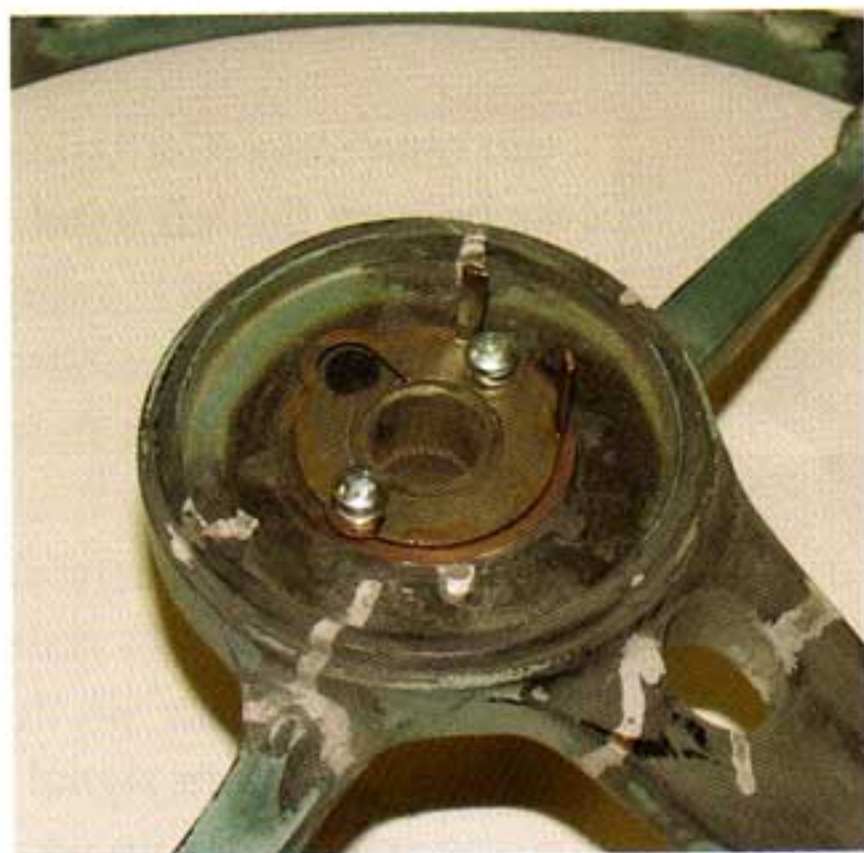


Photo #19: The turn signal canceling cam attaches to the bottom of the steering wheel with two #8 machine screws. Both parts are included in the rebuild kit. The fingers on this cam make contact with the canceling pawls to turn the turn signals off after completing a turn.



Photo #20a & 20b: The upper steering column bearing #53-21 includes a spring and split ring bearing seat. With the mast jacket mounted in the car, slide the bearing seat down onto the steering shaft and then the spring. This assembly will be trapped under the steering wheel, thus keeping a load on the upper steering column bearing.



Photo #21: After aligning the mark on the steering wheel with the mark on the top of the steering shaft, install the steering wheel onto the steering shaft using the flat washer and nut supplied with the kit. Torque to 45 lbs.



Photo #22a & 22b: The horn connector included in the upper column rebuild kit drops through the large hole in the steering wheel and makes contact with the contact ring on the upper steering column bearing.



Photo #23: The Bellville washer is the spring steel plate that fits between the plastic horn ring insulator and the steering wheel hub underneath the chrome horn ring. When the horn ring is pushed it will cause the Bellville washer to ground to the steering wheel center hub causing the horns to blow. Make sure the Bellville washer is installed with the arch upward towards the horn ring insulator. Also be certain the center of the steering wheel where the Bellville washer will make contact is bare metal, free of rust and paint.

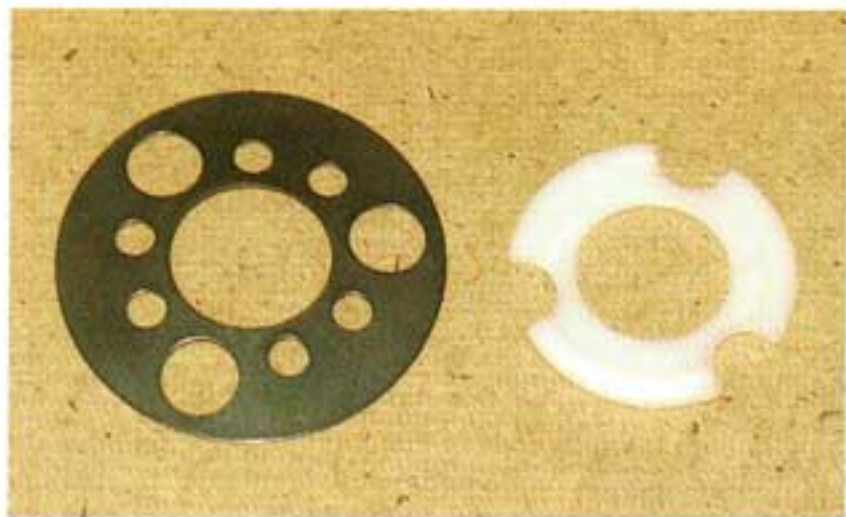


Photo #24: After the Bellville washer, install the horn ring insulator.

Photo #25: The nylon horn ring bushing is the plastic ring with the three barrels. This holds the horn ring, the horn ring insulator and the Bellville washer to the steering wheel using three screws.

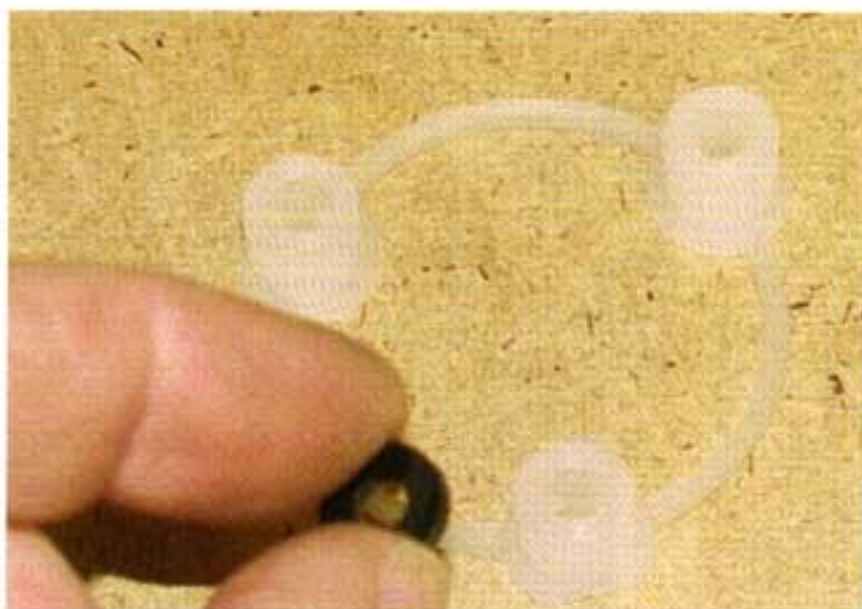


Photo #26: Using the three #10 machine screws, install the Bellville washer, horn insulator, horn ring and horn ring bushing. The screws will hold the horn ring tight but still allow the horn ring to tilt and make the horns operate.

Photo #27: Once everything is installed and the horn is working properly, install the horn center cap.

Good Luck! 

