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shows you how

BMW 3-Series (92-98) & Z3 (96-98) Haynes Online Manual

25 Airbag system components - removal and installation

Note:

Refer to the warnings given in [Section 24](#) before carrying out the following operations.

1 There are two possible types of airbag systems installed on these vehicles: Airbag System I and Airbag System II. The earlier (Airbag I) system uses a control unit and two separate impact sensors, one installed on each front suspension strut tower. On the later (Airbag II) system, a control unit with an integral impact sensor is used, the control unit being mounted underneath the rear seat cushion.

2 Disable the airbag system (see [Section 24](#)).

Driver's side airbag

3 Remove the lower half of the steering column cover (see [Section 27](#) in [Chapter 11](#)).

4 Unplug the airbag unit wiring connector (see illustration) . If you're planning to remove the steering wheel, also unplug the connector from the contact ring.

25.4 To disable the airbag system, unplug this orange connector (arrow) under the steering column; if you're removing the steering wheel, unplug this connector (arrow) from the contact ring



5 Loosen and remove the two airbag retaining screws from the rear of the steering wheel (see illustration) , rotating the wheel as necessary to gain access to the screws.

25.5 Loosen and remove the two airbag retaining screws from the rear of the steering wheel, rotating the wheel as necessary to gain access to the screws



6 Return the steering wheel to the straight-ahead position then carefully lift the airbag assembly away from the steering wheel and disconnect the wiring connector from the rear of the unit (see illustration) . **Warning:** *The airbag must not be knocked or dropped and must be stored with the trim side facing up. When carrying the airbag unit, the trim side must face away from your body.*

25.6 Return the steering wheel to the straight-ahead position then carefully lift the airbag assembly away from the steering wheel and disconnect the wiring connector from the rear of the unit



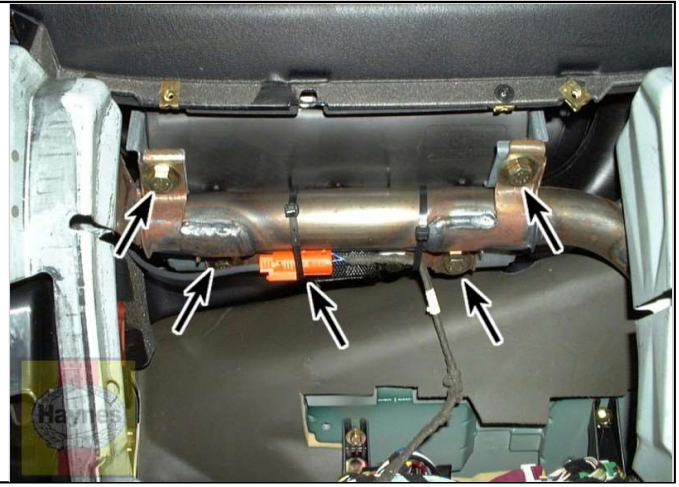
7 On installation reconnect the wiring connector and seat the airbag unit in the steering wheel, making sure the wire does not become trapped. Install the retaining screws and tighten them to the specified torque setting, noting the right-hand retaining screw should be tightened first. Reconnect the wiring connector and clip it onto the column then install the column shroud and connect the battery.

Passenger side airbag

8 Remove the glovebox and the lower dash trim panel (see [Section 27](#) in [Chapter 11](#)).

9 Unplug the electrical connector and remove the airbag retaining bolts (see illustration) . (If you can't unplug the connector while the airbag is still bolted in place, disconnect it after unbolting the airbag.)

25.9 To detach the airbag from the dash, unplug the electrical connector and remove these four bolts (arrows)



10 Carefully pry the airbag access cover (if applicable) from the dash (see illustration) . Remove the airbag assembly from the dash.

25.10 Carefully pry up the airbag access cover from the dash (Z3 model shown)



11 On installation, securely reconnect the wiring connector and seat the airbag in position.

12 Install the airbag retaining screws and tighten them securely. Plug in the electrical connector and install the cover (if applicable).

13 Install the glovebox and the lower dash trim panel (see [Chapter 11](#)).

Airbag control unit

1993 and earlier models (Airbag system I)

14 Remove the glovebox (see [Chapter 11](#)).

15 Release the unit from its mounting bracket and disconnect the wiring connector(s).

16 Installation is the reverse of removal.

1994 and later models (Airbag system II)

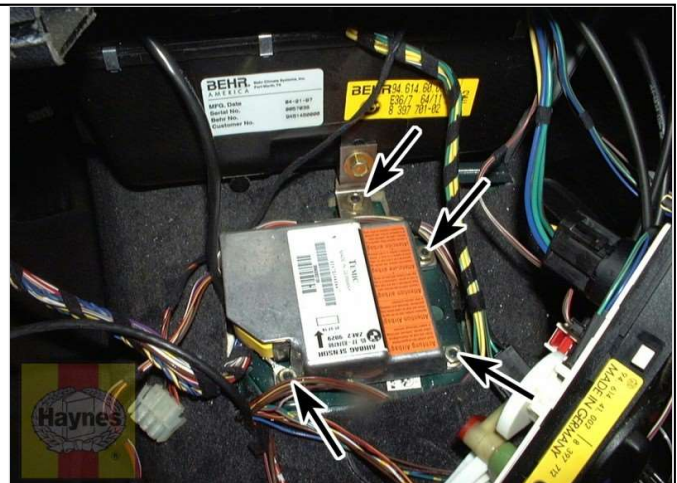
17 On 3-Series models, unclip the rear seat cushion and remove it from the vehicle. Then disconnect the wiring connector, remove the control unit retaining nuts (see illustration) and remove the unit from the vehicle.

25.17 Airbag control unit (Airbag system II)
- ensure the unit is installed with the arrow pointing towards the front of the vehicle (3-Series models)



18 On Z3 models, remove the center console (see [Chapter 11](#)), unplug the electrical connector, remove the control unit retaining nuts (see illustration) and remove the unit.

25.18 Airbag control unit retaining nuts (arrows) (Z3 models) - make sure that the arrow points forward when the control unit is installed



19 When installing the airbag control unit, make SURE that the arrow faces forward. **Warning:** *The control unit MUST be installed with the arrow pointing towards the front of the vehicle. Failure to do so will cause the airbag system to malfunction in the event of an accident.*

20 Installation is otherwise the reverse of removal.

Airbag wiring contact unit

21 Remove the steering wheel (see [Chapter 10](#)).

1993 and earlier models (Airbag system I)

22 Remove the locking tab from the contact unit and lift out the spring.

23 Unscrew the retaining nuts and remove the contact unit from the steering wheel.

24 Install the contact ring to the steering wheel, ensuring that the wiring is correctly routed. Install the retaining nuts, tightening them securely, and lock them in position by applying a dab of varnish/paint to their ends. If a new contact unit is being installed, unscrew the locking screw from the unit.

25 Install the spring to the contact unit and clip the locking tab back into position. Install the steering wheel (see [Chapter 10](#)).

26 Reconnect the wiring connector and clip it onto the column then install the column shroud and connect the battery.

1994 and later models (Airbag system II)

27 Unclip the trim cover and remove the screw securing the ground lead to the steering wheel.

28 Remove the retaining screws and remove the contact unit from the wheel.

29 Install the new contact unit to the steering wheel, ensuring that the wiring is correctly routed, and securely tighten the retaining screws. If a new contact unit is being installed, depress the retaining tangs and remove the locking peg. Connect the ground lead to the steering wheel, tightening its retaining screw securely, and install the cover.

31 Install the steering wheel (see [Chapter 10](#)).

32 Reconnect the wiring connector and clip it onto the column then install the column shroud and connect the battery.

Impact sensor

1993 and earlier models (Airbag system I)

33 There are two impact sensors, one on each side of the engine compartment.

34 Disconnect the wiring connector then remove the retaining bolts and remove the sensor from the side of the suspension strut mounting tower.

35 Installation is the reverse of removal ensuring that the sensor is positioned with its arrow pointing towards the front of the vehicle. Tighten the sensor mounting bolts to the specified torque.

1994 and later models (Airbag system II)

36 The impact sensor is an integral part of the control unit.

