



Haynes
shows you how

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

5 Bulbs (exterior lights) - replacement

04:36

Caution:

This video is for familiarization purposes only. Read below for specific information on your vehicle.

General

- 1 Whenever a bulb is replaced, note the following points.
 - A. Disconnect the battery negative cable before starting work.
 - B. Caution: If the stereo in your vehicle is equipped with an anti-theft system, make sure you have the correct activation code before disconnecting the battery.
 - C. Remember that if the light has just been in use the bulb may be extremely hot.
 - D. Always check the bulb contacts and holder, ensuring that there is clean metal-to-metal contact between the bulb and its live contact(s) and ground. Clean off any corrosion or dirt before fitting a new bulb.

E. Wherever bayonet-type bulbs are in-stalled, ensure that the live contact(s) bear firmly against the bulb contact.

F. Always ensure that the new bulb is of the correct rating and that it is completely clean before fitting it; this applies particularly to headlight/foglight bulbs (see below).

3-Series models

Headlight

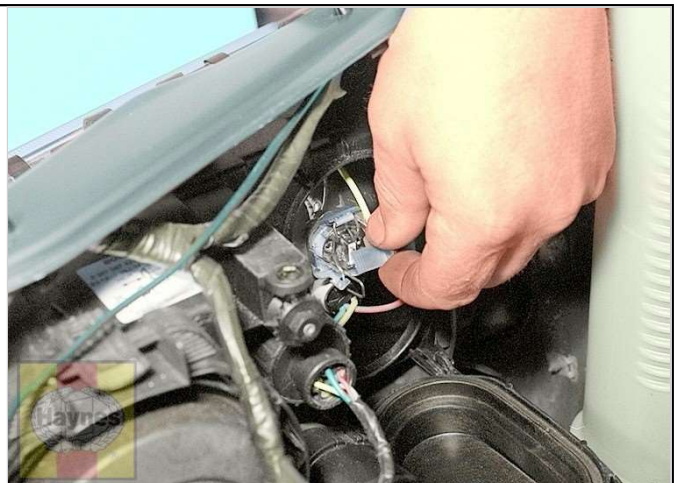
2 Release the retaining clip and remove the relevant access cover from the rear of the headlight unit (see illustration) . To improve access to the left-hand headlight, remove the air cleaner housing (see [Chapter 4](#)).

5.2 Release the retaining clips and remove the access cover from the rear of the headlight



3 Disconnect the wiring connector from the rear of the bulb (see illustration) .

5.3 Disconnect the wiring connector . . .



4 Unhook and release the ends of the bulb retaining clip and release it from the rear of the light unit. Withdraw the bulb (see illustrations) .

5.4a . . . then release the spring clip . . .**5.4b . . . and withdraw the bulb from the headlight**

5 When handling the new bulb, use a tissue or clean cloth to avoid touching the glass with the fingers; moisture and grease from the skin can cause blackening and rapid failure of this type of bulb. If the glass is accidentally touched, wipe it clean using isopropyl alcohol.

6 Install the new bulb, ensuring that its locating tabs are correctly located in the light cutouts, and secure it in position with the retaining clip.

7 Reconnect the wiring connector and install the access cover, making sure it is securely reinstalled.

Front sidelight

8 Depress the retaining clip and remove the access cover from the rear of the headlight unit.

9 Withdraw the sidelight bulb holder from the headlight unit (see illustration) . The bulb is of the capless type and is a push fit in the holder.

5.9 Removing the sidelight bulb holder from the headlight



10 Installation is the reverse of the removal procedure making sure the access cover is securely reinstalled.

Front turn signal light

11 Using a screwdriver, release the retaining clip and withdraw the direction indicator light from the fender (see illustration) .

5.11 Release the direction indicator light retaining clip with a screwdriver . . .



12 Unclip the bulb holder and remove it from the rear of the light unit (see illustration) . The bulb is a bayonet fit in the holder and can be removed by pressing it and twisting in a counterclockwise direction.

5.12 . . . then slide the light out of position and unclip the bulb holder



13 Installation is a reverse of the removal procedure making sure the light unit is securely retained by its spring.

Front turn signal side marker light

14 Remove the retaining screw and withdraw the light unit from the fender (see illustration) .

5.14 Remove the retaining screw . . .



15 Twist the bulb holder counterclockwise and remove it from the light. The bulb is of the capless (push-fit) type and can be removed by simply pulling it out of the bulb holder (see illustrations) .

5.15a . . . then release the bulb holder from the rear of the lens . . .



5.15b . . . and pull out the bulb



16 Installation is a reverse of the removal procedure. Do not overtighten the retaining screws as the lens is easily cracked.

Front foglight

17 Insert a flat-bladed screwdriver in through the front bumper grille and release the foglight retaining clip.

18 Withdraw the foglight from the bumper and rotate the foglight cover counterclockwise and release it from the rear of the light unit (see illustration) .

5.18 Unclip the foglight and release the bulb cover by twisting it counterclockwise



19 Disconnect the bulb wiring then release the spring clip and withdraw the foglight bulb (see illustrations) .

5.19a Disconnect the wiring connector then release the retaining clip . . .



5.19b . . . and withdraw the bulb



20 When handling the new bulb, use a tissue or clean cloth to avoid touching the glass with the fingers; moisture and grease from the skin can cause blackening and rapid failure of this type of bulb. If the glass is accidentally touched, wipe it clean using isopropyl alcohol.

21 Insert the new bulb, making sure it is correctly located, and secure it in position with the spring clip.

22 Connect the wiring to the bulb then install the cover to the rear of the unit.

23 Install the foglight to the bumper, making sure it is clipped securely in position.

Rear taillight cluster

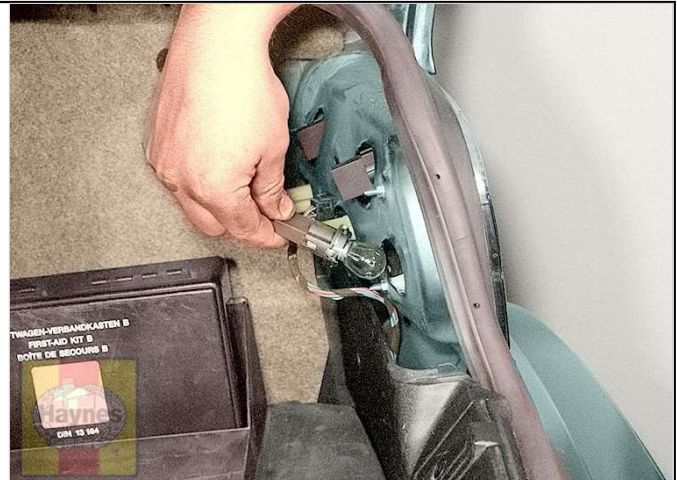
24 From inside the vehicle luggage compartment, rotate the retaining clip 90-degrees and remove the plastic access cover from the rear of the light cluster (see illustration) .

5.24 Release the retaining clip and remove the cover to gain access to the rear light bulbs



25 Rotate the relevant bulb holder counterclockwise and remove it from the light unit (see illustration) . The bulbs have bayonet fittings and are removed by pressing in and rotating counterclockwise.

5.25 Remove the relevant bulb holder from the light unit by twisting it counterclockwise



26 Installation is the reverse of the removal sequence.

High - level brake light

27 From within the luggage compartment, rotate the bulb holder counterclockwise and release it from the light unit. The bulb is a bayonet fit in the holder and can be removed by pressing it and twisting in a counterclockwise direction.

28 Install by reversing the removal procedure.

License plate light

29 Remove the retaining screws and remove the trim cover from around the lights (see illustration) .

5.29 Removing the trim cover from around the license plate lights



30 Press the light unit towards the left and unclip it from the trunk lid.

31 Release the bulb from the contacts and remove it from the light unit (see illustration) .

5.31 Unclip the license plate light from the trunk lid and remove the bulb from its contacts



32 Installation is the reverse of removal, making sure the bulb is securely held in position by the contacts.

Z3 models

Headlight

33 Remove the headlight mounting bolts (see illustration) .

5.33 Remove the headlight mounting bolts (arrows)



34 Pull out the headlight assembly far enough to unplug the electrical connectors for the two headlight bulbs (see illustration) .

5.34 Pull out the headlight assembly far enough to unplug the electrical connectors for the two headlight bulbs.



35 Turn the bulb holder counterclockwise a 1/4-turn and pull it out of the headlight assembly (see illustration) . Pull the bulb straight out of the bulb holder.

5.35 Turn the bulb holder counterclockwise a 1/4-turn and pull it out of the headlight assembly



36 When handling the new bulb, use a tissue or clean cloth to avoid touching the glass with the fingers; moisture and grease from the skin can cause blackening and rapid failure of this type of bulb. If the glass is accidentally touched, wipe it clean using isopropyl alcohol.

37 Install the new bulb in the bulb holder, insert the holder into the headlight assembly and turn it clockwise 1/4-turn to lock it into place. Reconnect the wiring connector and install the headlight assembly.

38 Tighten the headlight mounting bolts securely and then check the headlight adjustment (see [Section 8](#)).

Front turn signal light

39 Pull out the headlight assembly (see Steps 33 and 34).

40 Turn the bulb holder counterclockwise 1/4-turn and pull it out (see illustration) .

5.40 To detach the front turn signal light from the headlight assembly, turn the bulb holder counterclockwise 1/4-turn and pull it out



41 To remove the old bulb from the holder, push it in, turn it counterclockwise 1/4-turn and pull it out of the socket.

42 Installation is the reverse of removal.

Fog light

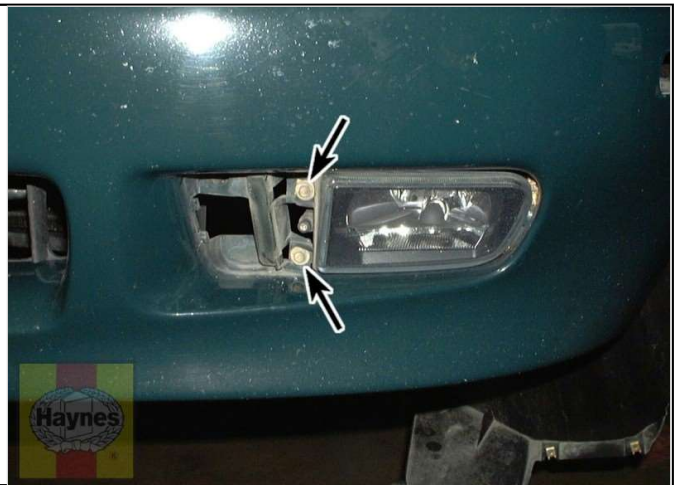
43 Pry out the cover plate next to the fog light lens with a small screwdriver (see illustration) .

5.43 Pry out the cover plate next to the fog light with a small screwdriver



44 Remove the two fog light retaining screws (see illustration) , pull out the fog light assembly and unplug the electrical connector.

5.44 To detach the fog light assembly from the body, remove these two retaining screws (arrows)



45 Separate the two halves of the fog light assembly, squeeze together the two ends of the wire spring clip that retains the bulb (see illustration) , then pull out the bulb and unplug the electrical connector.

5.45 Separate the two halves of the fog light assembly and then squeeze together the two ends of the wire spring clip that retains the bulb



46 Installation is the reverse of removal. When handling the new bulb, use a tissue or clean cloth to avoid touching the glass with your fingers. Moisture and grease from the skin can cause this type of bulb to fail prematurely. If you accidentally touch the glass part of the bulb, clean it off with isopropyl alcohol.

Front parking light

47 Pull out the parking light assembly (see illustration) .

5.47 Pull the parking light assembly out of the body



48 Turn the bulb holder counterclockwise and pull it out of the parking light assembly (see illustration) .

5.48 Turn the bulb holder counterclockwise and pull it out of the parking light assembly



49 Pull the bulb straight out of the holder.

50 Installation is the reverse of removal.

Front sidemarker light

51 Push the sidemarker light housing to the rear (see illustration) , then pull it out of the fender.

5.51 To disengage the sidemarker light assembly from the fender, push it to the rear



52 Twist the lamp socket counterclockwise and pull it out of the sidemarker light housing (see illustration) .

5.52 Twist the lamp socket counterclockwise and pull it out of the sidemarker light housing



53 Pull the old bulb out of the socket.

54 Installation is the reverse of removal.

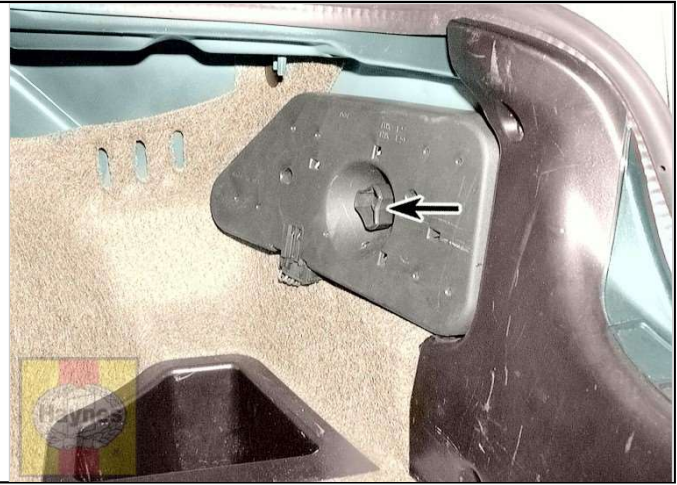
Rear back-up, brake, sidemarker, taillight and turn signal bulbs

Note:

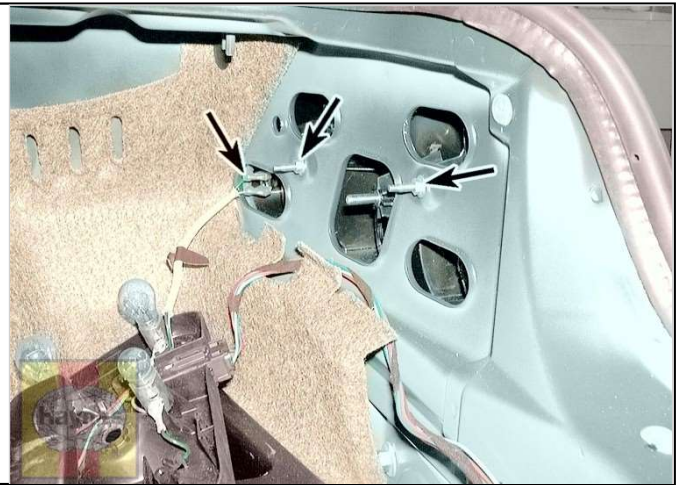
The rear back-up, brake, taillight and turn signal bulbs are installed inside a pair of plastic housings that can be easily accessed from the trunk.

55 Open the trunk, unscrew the knurled retaining nut that secures the tail light cluster assembly and *carefully* pull the tail light assembly straight out of the body (the tail light bulbs fit through stamped holes in the body) (see illustrations) .

5.55a To remove the inside half of the rear taillight housing, unscrew this knurled retaining nut . . .



5.55b . . . the side marker bulb (left arrow), which is located in the exterior part of the housing, can be accessed through the bulb hole; to remove the outer part of the taillight housing, remove the two retaining nuts (upper arrows)



56 To remove a bulb from the tail light housing assembly, turn it counterclockwise and pull the bulb out of the housing. (The side marker bulbs are not installed in the inside part of the housing with the other bulbs; they're located in the exterior part of the housing. But they can be accessed through the outer bulb hole in the body.)

57 Installation is the reverse of removal. Before reinstalling the tail light assembly, make sure that the side marker light electrical leads are routed correctly so that they won't be damaged when the knurled nut is tightened.

Center brake light

58 Pry off the plastic brake light access cover from the inside of the trunk lid (see illustration) .

5.58 To gain access to the center brake light bulbs, pry off this cover from the inside of the trunk lid



59 Rotate the socket with the bad bulb counterclockwise 1/4-turn, then pull the socket straight out (see illustration) .

5.59 To remove a center brake light bulb socket, rotate the socket counterclockwise 1/4-turn, then pull the socket straight out



60 Pull the old bulb straight out of the socket.

61 Installation is the reverse of removal.

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