



17 Steering wheel - removal and installation

Removal

Warning:

All models covered by this manual are equipped with Supplemental Restraint Systems (SRS), more commonly known as airbags. To avoid the possibility of accidental deployment of the airbag, which could cause serious injury, always disable the airbag system (see Section 24 in Chapter 12) before working in the vicinity of the impact sensors, steering column or instrument panel. Do not use electrical test equipment on any of the airbag system wiring or tamper with the airbag components in any way. Do NOT rotate the steering shaft while the steering wheel is removed; doing so can disable the driver's side airbag. An electrical contact ring on the backside of the steering wheel is held in the centered position by a plastic lock. Do NOT remove this lock! Doing so will allow the contact ring to rotate.

- 1 Set the front wheels in the straight-ahead position and release the steering lock by inserting the ignition key. Disable the airbag system (see [Section 24](#) in [Chapter 12](#)), remove the lower steering column cover (see [Section 27](#) in [Chapter 11](#)) and unplug the airbag and contact ring connectors (see [Section 25](#) in [Chapter 12](#)).
- 2 Remove the airbag unit from the center of the steering wheel (see [Section 25](#) in [Chapter 12](#)). **Warning:** *When carrying the airbag module, keep the trim side of it away from your body, and when you place it on the bench, have the trim side facing up.*
- 3 Loosen and remove the steering wheel retaining bolt (see illustration) .

17.3 After removing the airbag module, remove the steering wheel retaining bolt (arrow)



4 Mark the steering wheel and steering column shaft in relation to each other, then lift the steering wheel off the column splines (see illustrations) . If it is tight, tap it up near the center, using the palm of your hand, or twist it from side to side, while pulling upwards to release it from the shaft splines. Unplug the electrical connector.

17.4a After removing the steering wheel retaining bolt (but before removing the wheel), mark the relationship of the steering wheel to the steering shaft . . .



17.4b . . . and then lift off the steering wheel. Note the locating pin (arrow) on the column; when the wheel is installed again, make sure that this pin engages the hole in the contact ring on the backside of the steering wheel



5 The airbag contact unit will automatically be locked in position as the wheel is removed; do not attempt to rotate it while the wheel is removed, and don't allow the steering shaft to turn either. **Warning:** *Once the steering wheel has been removed, make SURE that the steering shaft is not turned. If it is, be sure to point the wheels straight ahead again before installing the steering wheel. Failure to do so could cause the airbag system to fail to deploy in an accident.*

Installation

6 Installation is the reverse of removal, noting the following points.

- A. The front wheels must be pointing straight ahead. If the steering shaft has been accidentally turned, make sure that it's rotated so that the wheels are pointing straight ahead before proceeding.
- B. The contact ring on the backside of the steering wheel should remain locked in its centered position when the steering wheel is removed. If the contact ring was accidentally rotated while the wheel was removed, re-center it by rotating it counterclockwise until it stops. Then rotate it clockwise until it stops,

counting the number of turns. Divide this number by two and rotate the contact ring counterclockwise by that amount. The ring should now be centered again.

- C. Prior to installation, ensure the indicator switch stalk is in the central (OFF) position. Failure to do so could lead to the steering wheel lug breaking the switch tab.
- D. Coat the steering wheel horn contact ring with a smear of petroleum jelly and install the wheel, making sure the contact unit wiring is correctly routed.
- E. Make sure that the locating pin on the column (see illustration 17.4b) engages correctly with the hole in the contact ring as the steering wheel is reinstalled.
- F. Engage the wheel with the column splines, aligning the marks made on removal, and tighten the steering wheel retaining bolt to the specified torque.
- G. Install the airbag unit, plug in the connector for the contact ring and plug in the airbag system connector (see [Chapter 25](#) in [Chapter 12](#)). Install the lower steering column cover (see [Section 27](#) in [Chapter 11](#)).

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