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10-23-2006

#1



53guy

USMC Heavy Lift Inc.

Join Date: Mar 2005

Location: Fredericksburg, VA

Posts: 1,930



Front Fender Trim Write Up (Retaining the stock flare)

Well, running 35's was a pain without trimming as I seemed to rub everywhere. I couldn't get myself to be happy with TJ flares and I really liked the stock look, so when I searched for it, I couldn't find anything about installing stock flares on a trimmed fender so I looked into it myself. Upon looking into it, I really only needed a few inches removed from the fender to clear the tires. So this was my project at work today, trimming my fenders and keeping the stock flares. It turned out much better than I thought and it looks very stock. I had a few guys take a look and compare my fenders to a stock jeep and they couldn't point out that I trimmed until I pointed it out to them. I also compared my fenders to those with TJ flares and I netted about the same amount removed and I think the stock flares look much better, so here's the writeup...

Tools needed:

10mm deep well socket

1/4 drive ratchet

8mm deep well socket

torx drivers

philips head screw driver

cutting tool (angle grinder, dremel, etc)

cleaning spray

rags or paper towels

hammer

paint

Stock without trimming





Step 1. Take photos because you'll probably never have stock fenders again!

Step 2. Remove the fender flares. 8mm bolts hold the flare to the bottom on the rocker panel, remove both those bolts and throw them away. 10mm nuts hold the flares on and are pretty easy to remove if you use a boxed end 10mm to break torque then a socket to remove it all the way. Once all the nuts are removed, you should be able to pull the fender away without any trouble. To those with fender liners still. Pull the liner out or just swing it out of the way as you'll be wanting to get into the wheel well later on.



Step 3. With masking tape, tape off the entire area around the wheel well opening. This will give you a place to write on and put some ideas down without messing the fenders up. It also provides a level of protection to the surrounding paint.

Step 4. At this point, you'll have to decide if flare positioning is important to you or not. If its not, just start cutting and figure it out later, but if its important to you like it was to me, read on. With the stock flare and mounting hardware still in one peice and the fender taped off, you'll want to figure out where you want your flare to line up. I wanted mine close to the body line so that I could get the most room as well as look nice. Once you figure out where you want it, find some paint and paint the tips of the bolts on the flare mounting hardware. This will give you a good idea as to where you want to drill the holes to remount the flares. Once you have your flare in position, use tape or something else to hold it up, step back and make sure its where you want it.



Mounting hardware



Step 5. Remove the fender flare and now you should have dots where you are to drill to mount the brackets to. Depending on how high you mount your flare will determine how you modify your brackets. I found that the higher I

mounted the flares, the less I had to modify the brackets. On both sides I had to trim the rear mount slightly and remove a bolt, redrill a hole and reuse the bolt. On the drivers side I had to also completely trim off a bolt because I couldn't get a nut between the fender and the washer reservoir.

The rear mount where I had to trim the bolt off



bolt and redrilled hole



Step 6. Now its time to drill the holes. On the passanger side, just go at it, you're not going to hit a thing. On the drivers side however, be very careful as your washer reservoir is behind the fender. My drill stop didn't work and you may end up looking like me with washer fluid all over the place.



Its about this time that you say to yourself "damn it to hell!" Its an easy fix, so don't fret. The bottle won't leak very

fast, so go find a sheet metal screw and some RTV. With your fingers, screw the screw in partially, enough to stop the leak. At this point, dry off the area and put some RTV around the screw and then proceed to tighten until it seems flush. DON'T STRIP THE HOLE OR IT WILL LEAK AGAIN!!



This is the bolt that I cut off because the bottle was in the way.

Step 7. Once all the holes are drilled, verify that the mounting brackets will fit in the holes and see if you're happy with their positions. They may not sit flush at the moment, but when you trim the fender and then reinstall the flare, you can tighten them down and they will sit much better.





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#2



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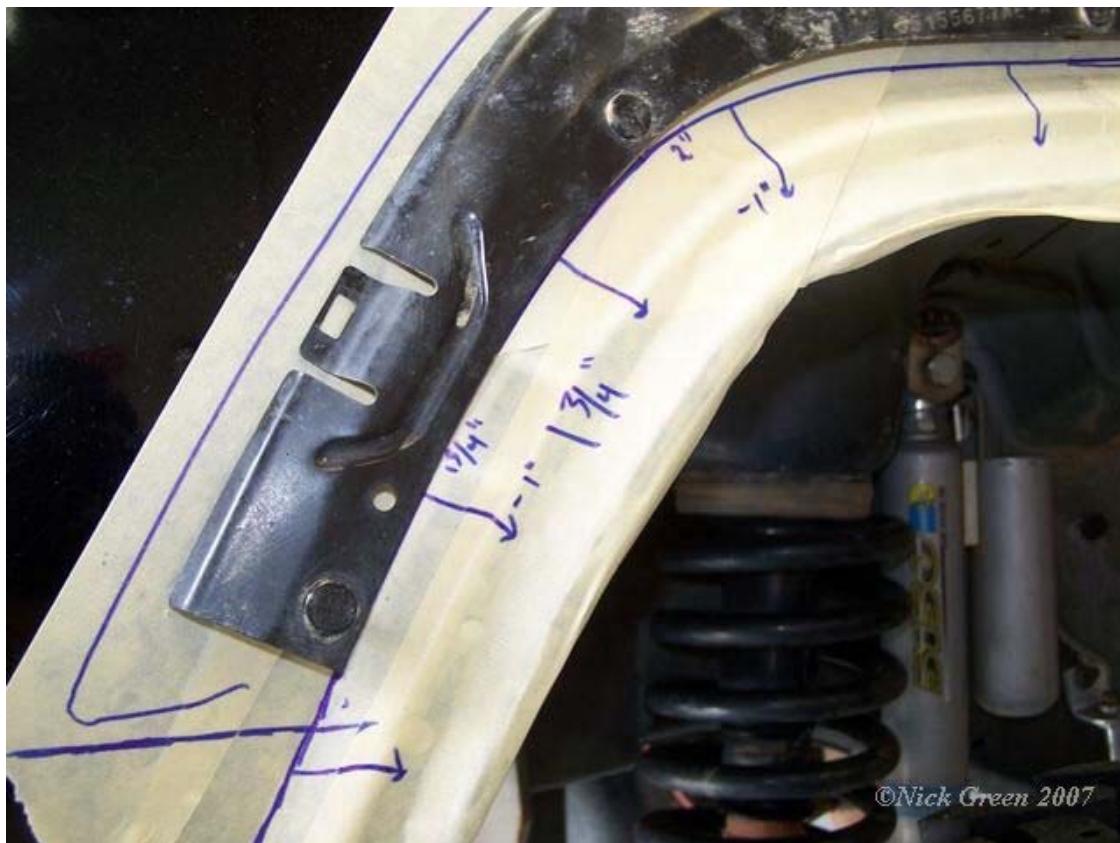
Re: Front Fender Trim Write Up (Retaining the stock flare)

Step8. Now that you have the holes lined up and everything is cool, you will now need to mark where you will trim the fenders. With the mounting hardware still in the fender, mark with a marker where you will want to trim. I found that about 1/4" from the mounting hardware was a good distance to trim.

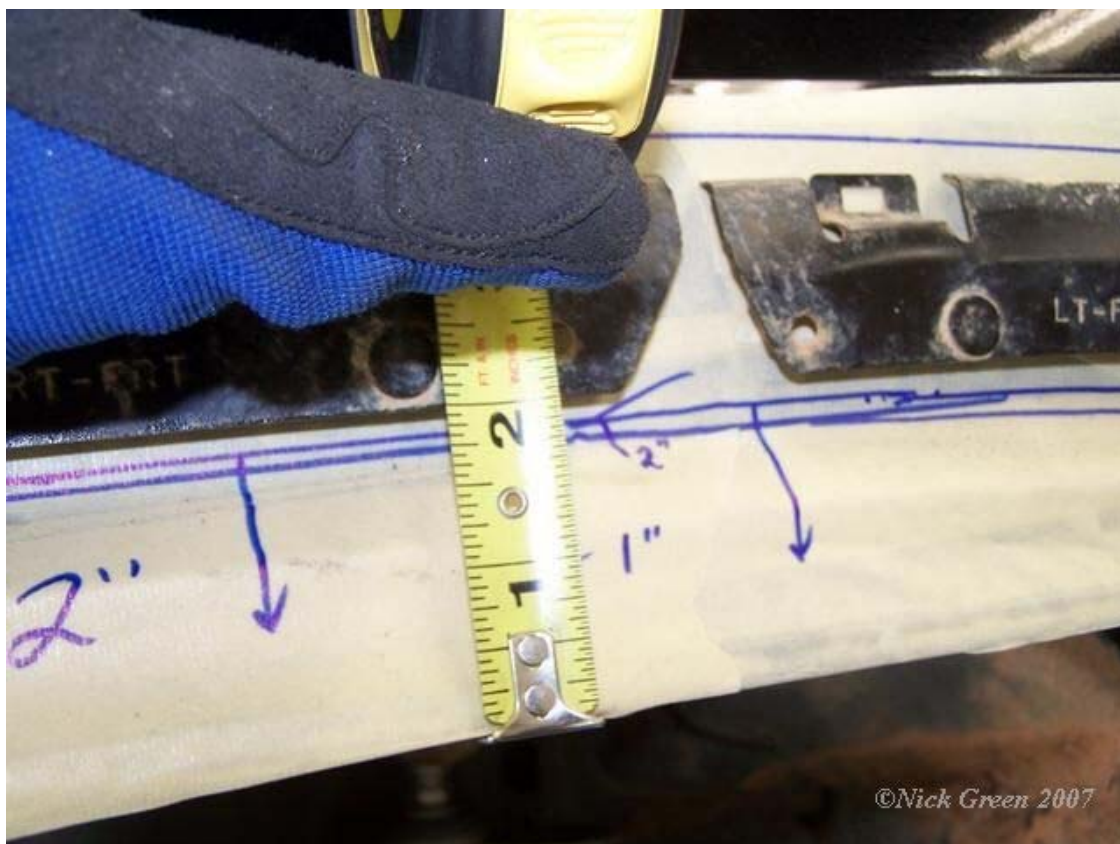




I ended up with about 1 3/4" trimmed in the front, 2" on the top, 1 1/4" from the 2 o'clock position, and 1 1/2" from the rear.







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#3 



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Re: Front Fender Trim Write Up (Retaining the stock flare)

Step 9. Now its time to trim. Using your preferred method of eye protection and your favorite cutting tool, go at it. I used a 4" angle grinder with a cutting wheel. You'll have to get creative in the rear and figure out how you'll want to trim around the fender bolts. I cut one off and it seems to be holding up fine. I retained the fender spacer with the rear bolt and just cut the front off. You may also want to be libral with a hammer and bend any protruding metal away from the wheel well so as not to cut your tires on full stuff. Another note is that there is fender support at the 12 o'clock position that you may or may not decide to retain. I reused it by bending it up and using a bolt from the fender flare to tighten it up.









Step 10. Now that you've trimmed up the fender, you are almost done. If you wish, it is a good idea to sand the edge of the metal to get rid of burrs or sharp peices of the fender. Also, you might be interested in sanding a bit of the paint away that is near the edge that may have become chipped while cutting. Once you are done sanding, remove the masking tape and clean the area very well (make sure you only clean the cut area and the area to be painted. Be VERY carefull not to touch the body where there is dust. That dust is metal flakes and fibers from the cutting wheel and will scratch you paint). Get your paper towels or bags and tape and mask off the area you are going to paint. Secure the paper towels around the area to be painted to prevent over spray and paint away.





Step 11. Let the paint dry. Once the paint is dry, reinstall the fender flare and make sure that everything attaches properly. Do not tighten the flare up yet. You'll want to trim some of the flare off at the bottom so that it contours to the body lines. Take patience and remove only a little at a time as this will be showing when you're done.





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#4 



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Re: Front Fender Trim Write Up (Retaining the stock flare)

Step 12. Once you're all trimmed up and the flare looks the way you want, tighten the flare up using your 10mm and ratchet and go do the other side.

Step 13. Tighten everything up and you're done! Go find a hose and spray all that dust and metal flakes off your Jeep and go flex it out and make sure it doesn't rub anywhere you don't want it to. ENJOY!!

OPTIONAL Step 14. Trimming the fender liner is more custom work than anything else, so you'll have to position it in the wheel well and secure it somehow and trim away. I found that sheet metal shears worked very well at cutting the liner and zip ties worked well at holding it up. Be creative and it will look very professional when done and it will keep a bit of mud and muck out of the engine bay and your door.

FINISHED!!









Room with new trimming. These are 35x12.50 tires on a 15x8" wheel with about 6" of lift. Your results will vary based on lift/tires/wheel/trimming combo.







More pictures at <http://www.fototime.com/inv/1A4926CA761ADEA>

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