

## **T-Bird Windshield Replacement**

*By Martin Bierman*

Replacement of the Thunderbird windshield is a project most T-Bird owners/hobbyists can perform themselves. One will need a new replacement windshield and windshield rubber seal. (Contact club members for the best sources for these two items.) One may also want to have all the stainless moldings restored and the outer and inner dog-leg moldings re-chromed as part of this project.

Start by removing the windshield wiper arms by pulling the arm outward and releasing the tab underneath at the base. Simultaneously carefully pry the arm off the wiper knob without marring the chrome bezel. Remove the inside mirror, sun visor brackets (if equipped), and top clamp receptacles from the upper frame. Remove the inner side dog-leg moldings, inner lower stainless moldings, and the inner upper stainless molding by removing the appropriate screws. Note the size and location of the screws since some are different lengths. Remove the weather-strip at the pillar interface on the outer dog-leg molding (3-4 very small screws); remove the side windshield molding clips and remove the screw from the retainer of the dog-leg to lower outer stainless molding; remove screws from outer dog-leg (3 or 4) and remove the dog-leg from the lower outer molding and the upper outer molding. Remove the upper outer molding by removing any screws from tabs (if present) and carefully prying the molding forward to release the clips in its underside from the retainer strips in the upper windshield area. **DO NOT** remove these retainer strips or the lower outer windshield moldings from the rubber seal yet. These are removed only when the windshield has been removed from the car (see below). Take a utility knife and cut away the old windshield rubber seal from the inside of the windshield frame. Once this is done one can apply firm pressure to the inside lower area and push the windshield up and out. Use firm constant pressure and work slowly to avoid breaking the glass. Once the windshield is out of the car frame, remove the lower outer stainless moldings and the upper retainer strips from the rubber seal. Take note how they fit in the seal and clip under the glass for future installation. Dispose of the old windshield and rubber seal. Clean the frame of any sealant or debris so the new rubber seal lip will fit properly.

Place the rubber seal on the windshield but do not glue it to the glass yet. Install the lower outer moldings and center clip and the upper retainers in the seal. Be sure these all clip under the glass. Install a small nylon cord all around the seal in the inside seal groove starting at the lower center part. As the end of the cord approaches the beginning of the cord overlap the two ends at the lower center area. Place the windshield in the frame. Two people are usually required for this part. Starting at the lower center seal area pull the nylon cord such that the rubber seal is pulled over the windshield metal frame lip. Have the second person apply firm pressure to the outside of the windshield while the cord is being moved. Continue this all around the windshield until one reaches the starting point in the lower center part. Don't worry if some areas of the seal do not fit over the frame lip especially at the windshield corners. Continue firm pressure and work the seal over the frame lip with a dull curved tool. (Don't tear the rubber seal with any sharp tool!).

Eventually you will be able to press the windshield into position and into the corners and have the rubber seal over the entire frame lip. Use black 3-M rope caulk at and over the rubber seal to frame interface on the outside top and down the outside dog-leg sides. Install the upper outer stainless molding by engaging the underside clips in the windshield retainers and pulling the molding over the frame. Install the outer dog-legs in the upper outer molding and into the lower outer molding using the retainers to connect to the lower moldings. Screw the retainers to the body and cover with the side clips. These clips notoriously fit poorly and the reproduction clips fit even worse. Install the upper inner stainless molding, the inner side dog-legs, the lower inner moldings and the center clip with the correct screws. Install the weatherstrip on the outer dog-legs; inside mirror; top clamp receptacles; and visor brackets (if equipped). Seal the outside rubber seal to the glass all around the windshield by placing the nozzle of windshield sealant tube between the glass and the rubber seal. Replace the wiper arms over the wiper knobs. Clean the glass and admire your work.