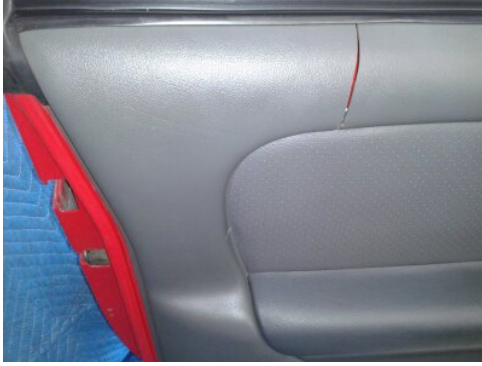


Tech Tip

How to repair 4th gen. F-body door panels

(By Steve Swain)



Subject: 1999 Trans Am – Driver's and passenger's door panels both cracked all the way through.



First remove the small screw from the door handle escheon, then remove the large phillip's shown in the picture and 2 other large phillip's below, then pop out the window switch and disconnect wires.



Carefully remove 1 or 2 staples in front and behind the crack until you see the door panel relax. I just set the side cutters there, so you can see what tool I used and where!



Here is everything that I bought to repair both door panels about \$10.00, because I already had the lock tight;-) 2 part epoxy, metal screen patches and #4 phillip screws 1/2" long, nuts and washer. After you remove the staples, you drill a 1/8" hole in each staple hole (1 hole for each staple) then insert 1 screw, apply a little lock tight and finger tighten the nut and washer. Apply a light coat of the 2 part epoxy to the crack and as it is setting up, put a piece of the screen mesh on the epoxied area. Then mix a generous portion of 2 part epoxy and cover the screen and surrounding area of the repair. Below is a jig (with a empty can of brake clean behind panel) that I set up to hold the door panel while it dried overnight. The screw jar is on the door panel for weight.

My door panels were cracked all the way through which took me longer, about 2 hours each per door panel, but it would have required less effort and time if I could have caught them in the beginning stages.



Here is the finished product, not perfect, but you really have to look hard to see the crack and is much easier on the wallet than spending \$200-\$450/ each for good used or NOS panels.



If you would like to see more pictures, High Performance Pontiac did a story on this in Nov, 2007. You can google "Firebird door panel repair" select the HPP link and it will take you right to it.