

MGA 3 point seat belt upper mount option

By Ralph Poupard

Originally MGAs were not equipped with seat belts from the factory. They were generally a dealer-installed option. I had originally installed 2 point seat belts in our 1957 1500 roadster. They were the original type with the aircraft style buckles. They looked good, but were probably not that effective for today's traffic conditions. After reading about several serious accidents involving MGAs I decided to upgrade to static 3 point belts to reduce the chances of serious injury. Of course I'm not planning on crashing my MGA, but it's always nice to have the possibility of escaping alive in case the unthinkable happens. I ordered the Moss 222-209 kit.

The 1500 model had no mounting point for the shoulder harness section of the belt, so I investigated the options by searching the Internet and talking to several members of the Michigan Rowdies. The options appeared to be mounting them to the top of the wheel well, or welding pre-fabricated brackets to the underside of the tonneau panel. After lowering the top I felt that the top or side of the wheel well would yield a limited pathway for the belt to pass through when the convertible top was folded, and the belt would also foul the side curtain pouch. The brackets under the tonneau panel would also require some type of modification to the side curtain pouch to allow the belt to pass through. What concerned me more was having to weld the brackets to the underside of the tonneau panel. I have heard that people have them welded on a completed car without discolouring or burning the paint off of the outside of the panel. Our car is Old English White, so it wouldn't take much discolouration to show on the paint. I also questioned whether a weld that has not heated the opposite side of the .036" thick sheet metal of the tonneau panel enough to discolour the paint would have enough weld penetration to hold the bracket in place during a front

end collision where the forces placed on the belt and mounting can be several Gs.

I discovered another option. The second rear fender mounting bolt from the door was in a good position for mounting the belt. The bolts are 5/16" NF, and after looking up the shear strength of a 5/16" grade 5 bolt and some calculations I realized that the standard fender bolts (in a longer length) would not be strong enough. The 7/16" grade 5 bolts that were supplied with the 3 point kit had plenty of shear strength safety factor. I decided to drill out the second bolt hole on each side to 7/16" diameter to accept the bolts in the Moss kit. This opens the hole in the spot welded nut and through the inner fender panel.



After painting the drilled area, I then passed the 7/16" bolt with a heavy support washer under the head through the hole from the fender side, and placed the spacer and belt mount over the bolt. After applying some blue Loctite to the end of the bolt, I installed the nut and tightened the assembly. The result I believe, is a neat and very strong installation. When the side curtain pouch is in position, the belt passes through the vertical gap next to the side panel. When the convertible top is lowered it is necessary to unclip the belt, pass it over the folded top frame and clip it back on. If at some time it was desired to return the setup to the original 5/16" NF bolt size you could make 5/16" NF threaded inserts from a length of a 1/2" NC bolt, thread the holes in the body 1/2" NC also and screw the inserts in place with red Loctite.

Since I am at the lower specification limit on that great Xbar chart tracking the height of human beings, you may want to temporarily fasten the mount in position and test fit the belt to make sure that it would be a proper fit for your height and seat position. ■