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Service Tips and Best Practices

VW MK4 Golf, Jetta and New Beetle – Axle Beam and Trailing Arm Bushing

Brand	Supreme	Product	Bushing	Date	June 2020
Part Number(s)	MS70406				

VW MK4 Golf, Jetta, New Beetle and their model variants use a rear beam suspension setup which feature a single trailing arm per side. These trailing arms maintain the position of the rear wheel spindles via bushings. These bushings are commonly referred to as axle beam bushings but may also be identified as beam bushings, axle pivot bushings or trailing arm bushings.

Common symptoms of a worn axle beam bushing include:

- Loud clunks from the rear end when the vehicle moves over potholes or bumps
- Feeling of "looseness" or wandering from the rear end
- Early wear and/or cupping on the rear inner tires
- Difficulty in achieving proper specifications during alignment

Generally, the bushing rubber will crack and tear. Additionally, on some early production VW models, this bushing is filled with a hydraulic fluid; which will leak once the rubber has torn. These failure modes can be verified by a visual inspection.

To successfully replace the trailing arm bushing and ensure maximum part life, it is important to adhere to the following:

- Axle beam bushings must be replaced on both sides of the vehicle.
- Axle beam bushings must be replaced with the same type on both sides. Early production models feature a 69mm OD metal sleeve which uses a hydraulic bushing. This type was updated by VW to a 72mm OD plastic sleeve which uses a solid rubber bushing instead, due to reliability and longevity concerns with the original design. The original metal sleeve with hydraulic bushing is no longer available from VW but is available in the aftermarket. The two bushing types are interchangeable however it is recommended to use the updated design.
- Use the factory tool for removal and installation. In most cases, this allows the repair to be accomplished in situ without having to remove the beam. Aftermarket tools may not have the correctly sized press/receiver cups which may warp or otherwise damage the axle beam bushing or beam bore.
- The factory tool will help ensure the bushing is even and square on the proper install axis. Correct seating and alignment are critical to part life longevity.
- Do not use a heat source to aid in removal. This can warp/distort or otherwise damage the beam bore and or ear.
- Do not use a hammer or apply blunt force to aid in removal or installation. This can warp/distort or otherwise damage new axle beam bushing, the beam bore and or ear.

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- After removing the worn bushing, remove all rust, burrs and other contaminants from the bore. Inspect the bore and ear for abnormal wear, enlargement, "out of roundness" and or other damage before installation.
- Ensure correct orientation and direction of axle beam bushing during install. Generally, this will mean locating the clocking indicator (this may be a notch, arrow or tab) on the bushing face or sleeve and aligning it to the edge of the trailing arm. **(Figure 1)**
- Ensure to renew hardware.
- Ensure all components are torqued to the correct values. For this repair, VW requires the distance between the centre of the wheel hub to the lower edge of the wheel well opening to be measured before removing wheel and lifting the vehicle. This value is important as the wheel spindle will be required to be repositioned before tightening the bushing retaining bolt to minimize cross-twist and pre-twist on the bushing. Look up and follow the correct torque procedure which is applicable to the vehicle being repaired.
- After repair, perform vehicle alignment. If vehicle fails to achieve rear end specifications, inspect beam for damage or distortion.

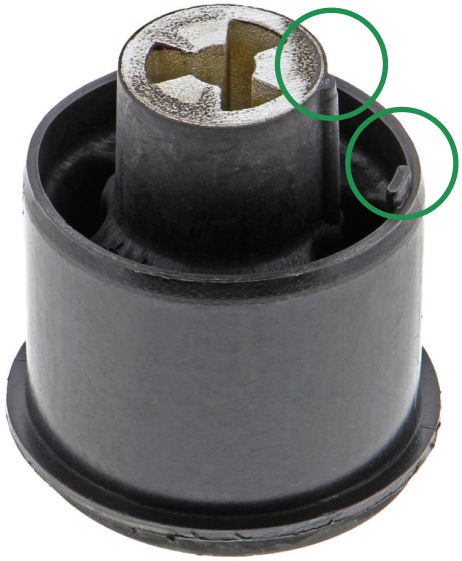


Figure 1: Tab indicator

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