



Essential bonnet lock and safety catch servicing for an MGB

Regular cleaning and servicing the MGB bonnet release and safety catch on an MGB and its derivatives are essential as reports of a few failures of the lock and safety catch leaving the bonnet free to lift in the airstream and blow up over the windscreen are a real concern. Here Ralph Coulson describes his regular inspection and maintenance routine.

Because of their position on the MGB the lock and safety catch are subject to driving rain, road salt contamination, dust and grit. Fortunately the design is both rugged and simple and general wear and tear is comparatively low, even on high mileage cars. However, due to the safety critical nature, good maintenance of these components should never be ignored.

Cleaning

All components should be cleaned on a regular basis, removing all traces of road dirt, grit, old oil and grease. I prefer to use white spirit and a ½" paint brush. Then dry with rag waste or tissue.

Inspection

Examine the release cable (not illustrated) for freedom of movement and full return.

Then check the Catch Plate Return Spring (8) which should be close coiled and free of corrosion, capable of 'snapping' the Catch Plate (4) back to its rest position. The Catch Plate should not have any appreciable wear on the underside where it engages with the Lock Pin (5). The same applies to the Lock Pin shoulder where it in turn engages with the Catch Plate. The Safety Catch Assembly (11) should move freely on its pivot, be sure the return spring is not damaged or broken.

Adjustment

When you are sure all the components are operating as they should and are corrosion free, the Lock Pin (5) should be adjusted to ensure the bonnet top surface lines up with the wings.

Bonnet Hinges and Cup-lock Locating (3) can be adjusted to equalise bonnet shut lines and alignment of the bonnet rear with the wings. Check to make sure the bonnet opens and closes freely without 'snagging'.

The Safety Catch (9) must engage fully with the Bracket: Safety Catch (11). This may be achieved by moving the Safety Catch forward and aft on the bonnet under panel. Check by viewing through the gap when the bonnet is released.

Lubrication

Most maintenance schedules would recommend white grease as a routine lubricant because it is robust and waterproof. I prefer light oil and regular cleaning.

One final check

If a 'flexible' body shell is suspected, especially with a Roadster, a simple check would be to run a front wheel up a high kerb. Release the bonnet, and then check if it can still be closed freely without 'snagging'. Observing the bonnet to wing shut lines could also give an indication of any flexing.

No	Description
3	Cup-lock locating
4	Catch Plate
5	Bonnet Lock Pin
6	Thimble-bonnet lock
7	Spring-bonnet lock
8	Spring-Catch Plate
9	Safety Catch
10	Captive Nut-anchor
11	Bracket-Safety Catch

Source: MGB, Tourer, GT and V8 – Up to September 1976 Parts Catalogue AKM 0039, page 108-K1