

An Alternative License Plate Bracket

I wanted better air flow through the radiator.

By Lynn Sondenaa

I OWN A 1929 AND A 1930 MODEL A, and I wanted better air flow through the radiator to keep them running cooler. So I removed the license plate and bracket from the headlight bar. Now the problem was where to relocate it. After trial and error, I found that a 1939–1941 Ford deluxe front license plate bracket will work just fine. But requires drilling two ¼ inch holes in the right front passenger side bumper bracket.

The 1939–1941 Ford deluxe license plate bracket (part number 91A-5034-B) has the correct curve to hold the license plate straight with the front bumper. It is also the correct height, so the license plate will be parallel to the bumper and have clearance above the bumper.



(Note: I have tried other years of the early V-8 Fords, and they do not fit the curve of the bumper bracket and they are not the height needed to place the license plate above the bumper. Additionally, please note that the 1939–1941 standard license plate bracket also does not fit correctly, so use the bracket from a deluxe passenger car.)

I also placed a piece of 308 stainless steel sheet metal (14 gauge) on the back of the license plate to give strength in case it gets bumped. You will have an attractive license plate holder that looks authentic and the air flow thru the radiator will be improved.

You might be asking why there's a white zip tie on the bumper and bracket. It's there for safety. If the bumper clamp breaks, the bumper will not fall off. ☹

Lynn Sondenaa of Sandy, Oregon, studied mechanical engineering and industrial technology at Oregon State University where he earned his Bachelors and Masters Degrees. He purchased his first Model A while in the 7th grade. He and his wife, Patty, currently own a 1929 Roadster Pickup and a November 1930 Victoria. They are members of the Beaver Model A Club of Portland, Oregon. They joined MAFCA in 1972.



DRILLING THE BUMPER BAR

The bar is made of spring steel, which is hard. You first need to drill pilot holes of 1/8 inch diameter, then drill the ¼ inch diameter holes. You have a choice of five types of twist drill bits. These go from drill bits that will work okay to ones that work the best. Their price ranges from average to very high.

- Titanium nitrate coated
- Cobalt
- Carbide
- Tungsten
- Diamond

I drilled my pilot holes using a cobalt twist bit, then a carbide twist bit for the ¼ inch holes. Use a low speed of 600 rpm for the pilot holes and 300–400 rpm for the ¼ inch holes. Use very light pressure and a drop or two of cutting oil (not motor oil; it will smoke). If the drill bit starts to get hot, let it cool. Otherwise you will ruin the bit.

The drilling process can be completed on the car using an angle hand drill. It will take about 30 minutes. I find it is best to remove the front wheel and tire for extra working space. For safety purposes, use a jack stand on the front axle.

