

Replace a BUSTED MIRROR

Crunch doesn't have to mean Ouch! Replace your side view mirror for less than \$80, including the tools.

by Rick Muscoplat

You had plenty of clearance yesterday morning. But as you drank your coffee and backed out this morning, the garage door opening mysteriously closed in on your car and ripped off the side view mirror. Even if your insurance will cover it, this \$325 body shop repair is most likely less than your deductible. In other words, it's coming out of your pocket. The good news is that you can replace the mirror yourself for about \$80!

Order a replacement mirror online

Start your repair job by searching the Internet for an aftermarket mirror. We found our mirror at www.carmirror.com, which is just one of many Internet sources. We paid \$37.26 plus shipping—a far cry from the \$175 the dealer wanted. Because replacement body parts have to be painted to match your car, we

visited www.duplicolor.com to help us locate the factory paint color code. With this info in hand, we visited an auto parts store and purchased cans of aerosol touch-up paint and primer. The primer and paint cost about \$11.

Painting the mirror was easy. We simply masked off the glass and followed the spraying instructions on the paint cans. But if you're not up to painting it yourself, take it to a body shop, which should charge about \$75.

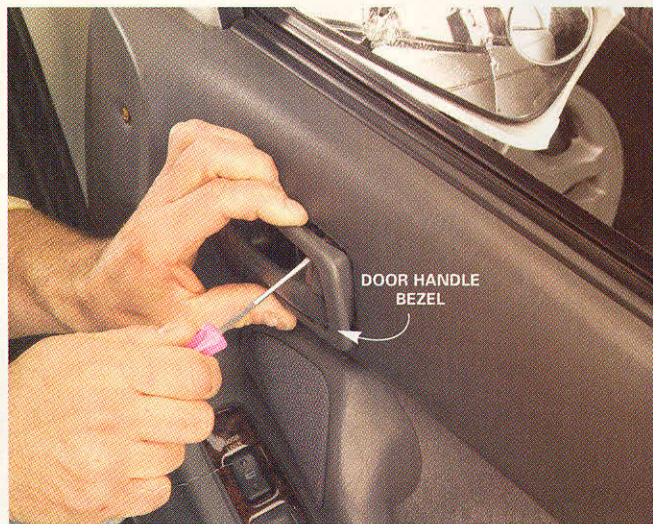




1 Pop off the mirror trim panel using the Door Panel Remover tool.

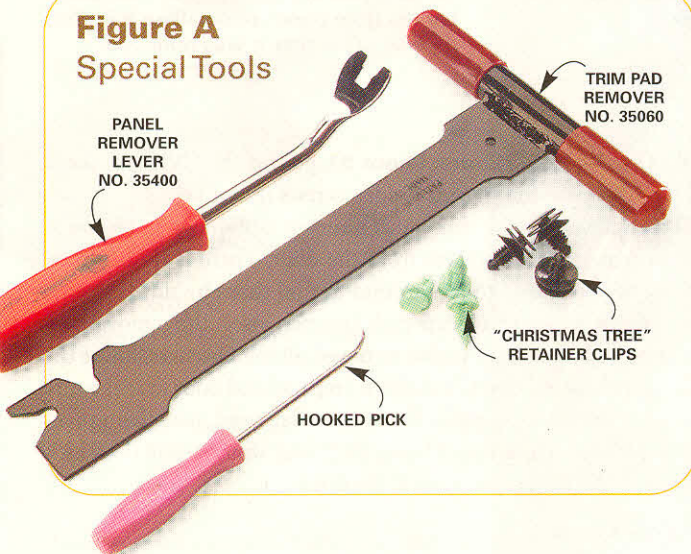


2 Remove decorative vanity caps from screws with the hooked pick, then remove the screws.



3 Check for retaining screws holding the door handle bezel. If there aren't any, that's your clue that it snaps into place. Use a small flat-blade screwdriver to undo the snaps.

Figure A Special Tools



Remove the cover and door panels

Our power mirror repair required the removal of the door trim panel to access the mirror's electrical connector. This may seem scary at first, but with the right tools (available at auto parts stores), it's simple. If your car has a manual mirror, you can probably skip that step and simply pop off the mirror trim panel and remove the three retaining screws (**Photos 1 and 4**).

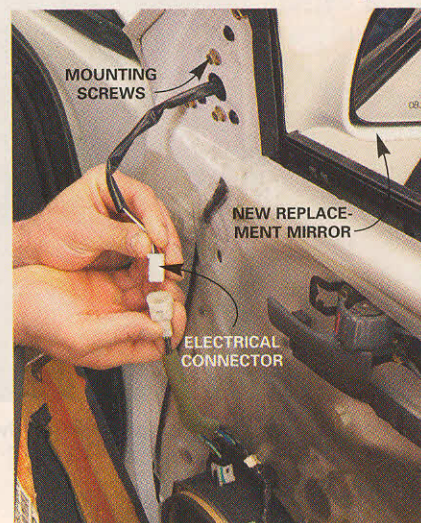
Removing the door trim panel isn't hard. It's designed to be removed for all types of servicing, such as repairing door handles and window mechanisms. The most challenging part is finding all the hidden fasteners. The trick to removing the trim panel is to know that trim panel screws are usually hidden behind decorative vanity caps (DVCs) or in obscure recesses. Start your search with the armrest. Look for screws in the finger pull area, under the armrest or behind speaker grilles. If you see a round cover that serves no visible purpose, chances are it's a DVC. Using



Figure B
Door panel fasteners



4 Remove the three mirror mounting screws on the inside of the door and replace the mirror.




5 Connect the electrical connector and test the mirror. Then reassemble the door panel, reinstalling it in the reverse order that it was removed.

a “hooked pick” (available at hardware stores; **Photo 2**), pry off the DVC and you’ll most likely find a hidden screw. We found four hidden screws in our vehicle.

After you remove all the screws, use the trim panel removal tool shown in **Figure A** to remove the Christmas tree-shaped fasteners from the door. There is no universal pattern to these fasteners, so you’ll have to feel around to find them by slowly prying around the edge of the trim panel. As you locate each fastener, insert the removal tool behind it and pop it out of its hole. When you’ve removed all the fasteners, lower the window and lift the trim panel up and out. Check the trim panel and door to make sure all the fasteners came out of the door properly. If any were damaged, take them to an auto parts store to get the proper replacements. Leave the power window and door lock connectors in place and lean the trim panel against the door.

Disconnect the cable

Next, follow the cable from the mirror and disassemble the mirror's electrical connector. Remove the screws that hold the mirror and remove it from the door. Attach the new mirror. Reconnect the electrical connector and make sure you test the new mirror before putting the parts back into place. Reverse the entire procedure to reassemble the door trim panel. Use your fist or a small rubber mallet to reinsert the Christmas tree trim panel fasteners. Replace the screws and the DVCs. 

Taming the crank

If your car has power mirrors but manual windows, you'll have to remove the window crank before you can remove the trim panel. It's impossible to do without this special door handle removal tool, the Lisle No. 18600 (\$5.90).

Simply slide the tool onto the window crank and dislodge the spring clip. Make sure you hold a cloth around the crank to catch the clip. Then pull the crank off the splined shaft. To replace, insert the spring clip in the grooves on the crank and push the entire crank onto the splined shaft until it "clicks."



Buyer's Guide

Lisle tools are available at www.toolsource.com and at CARQUEST Auto Parts stores nationwide.

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