

Focus on Suspension

The Ford Focus was introduced in 1998, and has proved to be very popular with its owners. However, it is also reported to be one of the most popular vehicle models visiting workshops for repair work. With this in mind, we have identified some wear items that are of note when repairing the suspension system of this popular model.

FRONT SUSPENSION

The independent front suspension of the Focus is made up of a MacPherson strut attached to the steering knuckle, and a track control arm with an anti-roll bar for stability.

The anti-roll bar links, when worn, can produce a rattling noise symptom while being driven on bumpy roads.

One of the most common wear items on the MK 2 model is the track control arm bush, (Fig 1). This component is available as part of the complete arm or available as a separate part with new fixing bolts. The latter, is available from SWAG, and offers an economic repair of this component, compared with replacing the whole arm, which in most cases is perfectly serviceable.

When carrying out this replacement, the alignment of the new bush is very important. The bush needs to be aligned correctly on the shaft of the suspension arm for its correct operation and to ensure long life of the replacement component. The old bush can be pressed off or carefully cut off using suitable equipment, so as not to damage the shaft that the bush is mounted on.

Once the old worn bush is removed, clean the shaft, then the new bush should be pressed on; there is a special tool available



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

to maintain the alignment of this, while the new bush is being pressed into position. (Fig 2)

The repaired arm can now be refitted to the vehicle. The bush (SWAG 50 93 2418) has applications for several other Ford, Mazda and Volvo models.

REAR SUSPENSION

The highly acclaimed control blade trailing arm multilink suspension system was developed for the Focus model; its compact design allows maximum use of space for luggage capacity and gives excellent handling. The thin trailing arm handles, fore and aft wheel location and brake-torque reaction, with three other links that are needed to fully locate the wheel. All these components have bushes that are prone to wear. The trailing arm bush (SWAG 50 93 4249), which is replaceable like the front control arm, needs to be aligned correctly during installation; otherwise the rubber will over twist and shorten the life of the bush. (Fig 3)

The track control arm, which is located between the cross member and the knuckle, is prone to stress fractures which can lead to failure after long service. When this arm is

removed to gain access to other components such as the road spring, or when it needs replacing, the fixing bolts are prone to corrosion. (Fig 4)

This leads to the bolts shearing during removal or being seized to the bush inner sleeve. Therefore, it may be necessary to cut them off in order to remove the arm.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

The inner bolt, which is an eccentric bolt, is for camber adjustment, it must turn freely if it is to be adjusted. It is recommended that all bolt fixings are tightened only when the vehicle's suspension is under load, not free hanging, as this puts unnecessary strain on the bushes and can lead to them being tightened in the incorrect position.

When all suspension repairs are carried out a full wheel alignment is recommended, to ensure the vehicle's correct handling.

Many SWAG suspension components are available as a special repair kit, which comes complete with all necessary fixings to carry out a repair. This saves the installer time and money by avoiding the need to source separate parts.

Rely on tested OE matching quality spare parts by SWAG. The entire range of Steering and Suspension parts can be found at: partsfinder.bilsteingroup.com

