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Customer Relations Group**

Greetings! I hope you have been enjoying your Winter so far. It has been very cold here in Ohio so I am hoping for a change in the weather pattern so we can warm up a little. At least to the freezing mark!!

I received another email from a customer asking if I would explain the steps taken to adjust a main door. He stated that his does not shut as well as it used to and may need an adjustment. I will cover the steps I take when inspecting the doors for what adjustment needs to be performed. I will be covering what I consider to be minor adjustments that can be performed with little tooling. There may be times when major adjustments need to be performed which would result in some removal of parts of the door and require specialized tools which should be performed by an authorized dealer.

Adjusting the door latch striker

Over time and use the main door may shift slightly in the door jamb. When this happens the jaws of the door latch itself may not line up perfectly with the striker plate causing the door to shut harder than it should. The striker bolt is threaded in to a piece of steel which we call the backing plate. In order for this backing plate to stay in place we install a pop rivet through the door jamb directly in to this plate. Below is a picture of the striker bolt and the plate that is used.



Striker Bolt



Striker Backing Plate

Next you will want to close the door slowly to see how the jaws on the latch line up with the striker bolt. Pictures below.



The picture on the left shows the bottom jaw is touching first which would mean the striker bolt needs to be moved up slightly. The picture on the right shows the top jaw touching first so the striker bolt needs to be tapped down slightly. The next set of pictures will show how to properly move the striker bolt.



To move the bolt first take a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wrench or socket to loosen the bolt. Just loosen the bolt about a $\frac{1}{4}$ of a turn. If you loosen it too much it will not hold the position once you start tapping it to move. Then drill out the pop rivet using a #30 drill bit. Now both the pieces will be free to move.



Using a chisel and hammer tap the bolt up or down depending which way the bolt needs to be moved. Retighten the bolt and check for proper alignment with the jaws on the lock. If not loosen it $\frac{1}{4}$ turn and move until it is centered. If the alignment is good then drill the rivet hole out again and install a new rivet.

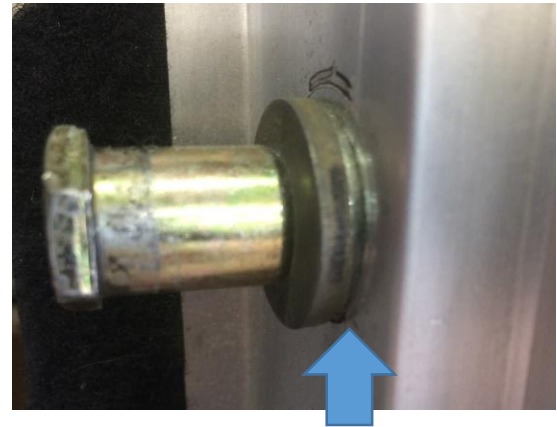
Adjusting the striker bolt when the jaws are hitting the head of the bolt

There are times when the striker bolt will need to be adjusted outward so the jaws of the lock hit in the correct position on the striker bolt. When this scenario happens the door tends to stick and rub and will not open or close correctly. I will show you below how I adjust the striker outward.



Wrap some masking tape around the striker bolt and then shut and open the door a few times. As you can see in the picture to the right above, the jaws of the lock are actually making contact with the head of the bolt which will cause it to drag while opening and closing. To fix this you will actually need to remove the striker bolt completely and add a washer so you want to make sure that the pop rivet is still holding the backing plate in place. I would recommend to go ahead and drill the pop rivet out and replace it ensuring that it is holding. If you

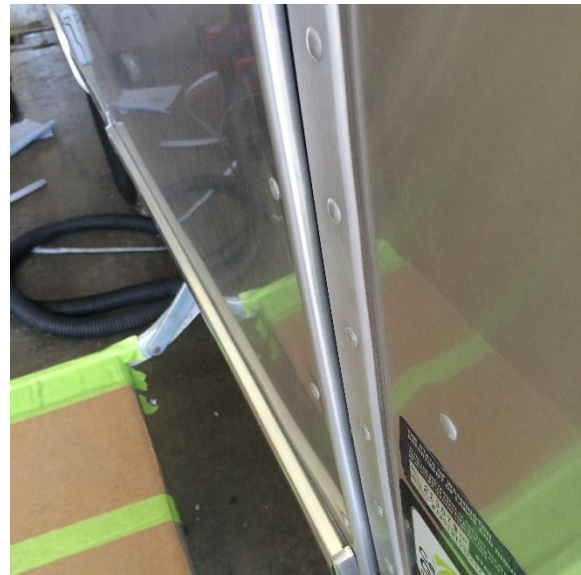
remove the striker bolt and the pop rivet is not holding then the backing plate will fall inside the wall with no easy access to retrieve it. The pictures below will show you how to add the washer.



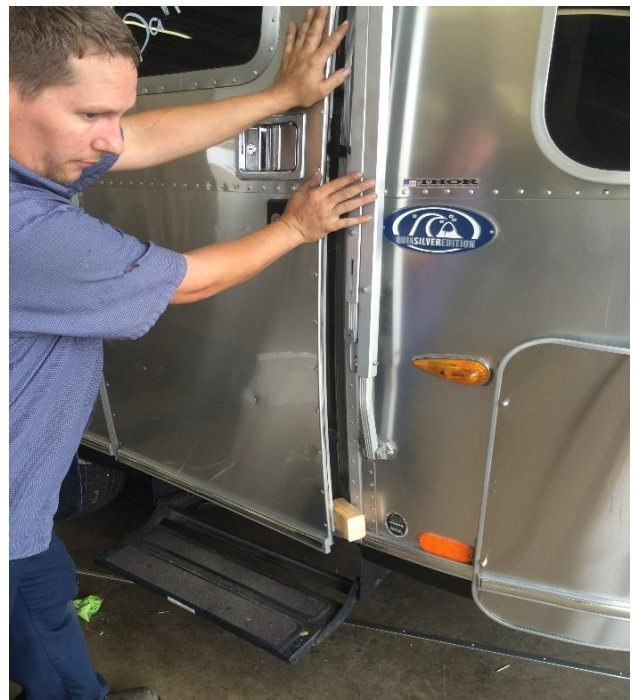
After you have made sure the pop rivet is holding go ahead and thread the striker bolt completely out. Then add a thin washer and reinstall the striker bolt and tighten it back down. Recheck the striker alignment on the door to make sure the jaws are no longer rubbing on the head of the bolt. Note: even adding a thin washer behind the striker bolt could cause the screen door to rub on the striker bolt so a slight adjustment inward may be needed on the screen door afterwards.

Adjusting the contour of the main door

When a main door has the correct contour the door will actually touch at the top and bottom slightly before it touches in the center. Remember the door does not have any latch feature at the top and bottom so the only way to ensure these areas stay tight is to make sure they touch first. Then the latch will hold the center tight. That is the reason our doors shut a slight bit harder than flat doors. You can make slight contour adjustments to the door with wood spacers and some muscle. I will show you some pictures below of how to make these adjustments.



To check the contour of the door hold the door so there is a slight gap between the door and the door frame like the pictures above. The gap should be fairly even from top to bottom on the opening side of the door. If the gap is not even then we can add or remove contour from the door. The following pictures will guide you.



The most common adjustment is that the door has lost some of its contour over time and needs to be adjusted with more curve. The picture on the left shows this adjustment. Stick a 6 inch piece of 2X4 in the center and have one person press inward at the top while another person presses inward at the bottom. This should help to gain more contour in to the door and provide a better fit at the top and bottom. The picture on the right shows the adjustment you need to make if either the top or the bottom are hitting too hard first. Move the 2X4 block to the top or the bottom and press inward in the middle. Remember to apply pressure and check it often. If the door needs more than a 1/4 inch of contour adjustment than the interior of the door may need to be removed and I suggest allowing a dealer to make that major adjustment for you. Trying to apply too much pressure in this

manner without removing the inner door aluminum sheet could lead to a slight wrinkle on the interior so just make minor adjustments of a 1/4 inch or less.

Article continues in the April issue.

I would love to hear from you and if you have a suggestion or topic you would like to see covered in a future article, or have a question just drop me a line at rmarch@airstream.com .

Have a great month!

Rick March