

## *Resetting the Convertible Top*

This is the procedure to reset the E36 convertible top in case you have used the emergency release handle that's located under the rear seat\*. This works on the author's '97 which had the fully automatic top. It may also work on other E36 models and years. The owner's manual says to take the car to a Dealer for service but why do that when the procedure is so simple [APPARENTLY!!]

The owner's manual describe the method for closing the top manually, presumably in case you have a dead battery with the top down and it starts to rain! The top mechanism is driven by two electric motors that are located in the trunk/boot – one for the lid of the storage bin/compartiment and for the top itself. Closing the top manually requires releasing the two motors from their transmission drives [using the afore-mentioned lever\*, which, through a cable release mechanism, causes the motors to pop away from their drives], pulling the top out of its storage bin/compartiment and then using an Allen wrench/Allen key [from the tool kit in the boot] to fully close and lock the top to the windshield. The Allen wrench/key gets inserted into a socket that is hidden behind a plastic cover at the leading edge of the top, and then you turn it many, many times to stimulate the action of the electric motor. NOTE: there are interlocks between the storage bin/compartiment lid and the trunk that prevent you from opening both at the same time.

Once the two motors have been disengaged, the top can only be operated manually – the LED in the control switch blinks, and the owners manual says you have to take the car to the Dealer to reset the correct operation of the top. The reason is that the two electric motors have to be re-engaged with their drive mechanisms and also re-synchronized with each other [you wouldn't want the top to crash into the lid of the storage bin].

Never fear, there is a fairly easy way to reset all of this yourself! The following is courtesy of Brett Anderson, who came to the author's rescue on this topic. He was having a new subwoofer and amplifier installed in his car, and the installer had the rear seat out when he decided to pull on the release handle to see what could happen [it has a red tag on it that just seemed to scream 'pull me' -- who could resist?]

First, manually open the top, placing it back into its storage compartment, and then close the lid of the compartment as far as it will go. You may need to push down the lid so that it closes far enough to allow you to open the trunk/boot [there's a safety interlock that prevents the trunk/boot from being opened if the lid is open at the same time]. Working inside the trunk/boot, remove the carpet liner from the left side of the trunk. There are two plastic clips that hold the liner in place – you can pry them out with a screwdriver. Behind the liner are the two motors that work the mechanism -- one drives the top and the other is for the lid. Each motor is mounted on a spring-loaded pivot mechanism. The gears on the motors normally engage the gears for their respective transmission mechanisms, but when the lever is pulled the motors pop away and disengage.

So you have to push the motors back into their original positions so that the gears re-engage. When you do this the spring-loaded catch mechanism will firmly latch into place. **Be sure that the motor is firmly seated into the drive, and not just partially engaged.**

Once both motors are re-engaged, get into the car, and with the ignition key in the 'off' position press and hold the top control switch in the up [for closing] position.. Continuing to hold this switch, turn the key to the 'accessory position' [second position ie without starting the car] and hold it there. After about 12 seconds the lid will be sucked down into the locked position and then, after a few more seconds, the top will start its normal closing procedure. The motors are now re-synched, and should be all set. Work the system a few times to ensure that both motors are properly engaged and all is well.

*GOOD LUCK!!*