

Volkswagen Cabriolet How-to

Removing the Dash Bezel, Instrument Cluster, Dash & Kneebars

This how-to was originally posted on VWvortex.com by "Black_cabbie" (it has been edited for this how-to for clearer instructions) using pictures provided by Tom Laudeman as posted on <http://laudeman.com/cabrio/> : <http://forums.vwvortex.com/zerothread?id=1663589> .

Kneebar removal begins on page 5.

Dash Bezel, Instrument Cluster & Dash Removal

Tools needed (does not include tools needed to remove steering wheel):

- Phillips screwdriver
- Small flathead screwdriver
- Offset Phillips screwdriver
- Your radio head-unit's removal tools
- 8mm wrench or socket wrench
- Baggie and/or cup (to temporarily store the screws while you work)

Steps

1. Disconnect the battery.
2. Using your radio's removal tools, pull the radio head-unit out of the dash.

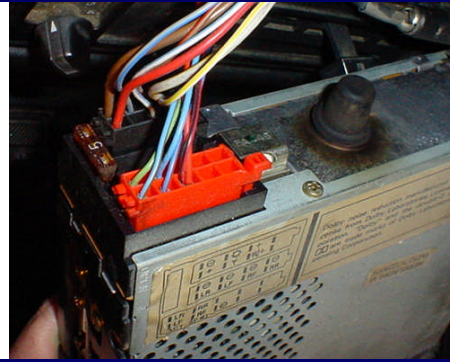
No tools? For the OEM head-unit, simply bend two wire coat-hangers (or cut one into two pieces) into U's and insert them as shown. For aftermarket head-units, head to your local Best Buy, Radio Shack, etc. for removal tools.

Note: For those with airbag-equipped cars, you may also want to disconnect the [airbag harness](#) at the relay panel for additional protection.

3. Remove the radio head-unit's wire harness plug(s) and antenna wire.

4. Remove the plastic covers for the switches.

Photos



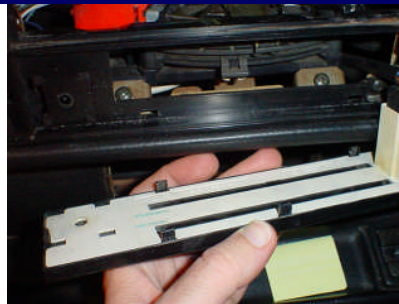
5. Remove the HVAC control levers by simply pulling them straight out.



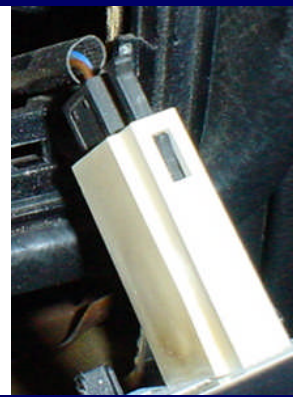
6. Remove the HVAC fan switch knob by pulling it straight out.



7. Reach into the head-unit opening and push the HVAC control plate out.

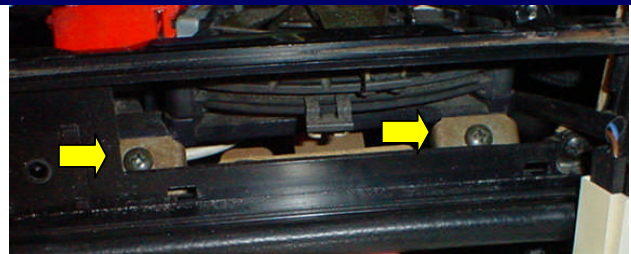


8. Press the black locking tab on the HVAC control plate's wiring harness and pull it out.



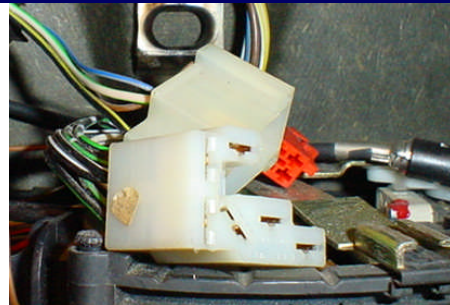
9. Remove the two HVAC control unit mounting screws.

Note: You will want to do this step even if you are not completely removing the dash. If you do not do this, you could potentially damage the control unit's mounting tabs while working inside the dash (and these control units are not available new).



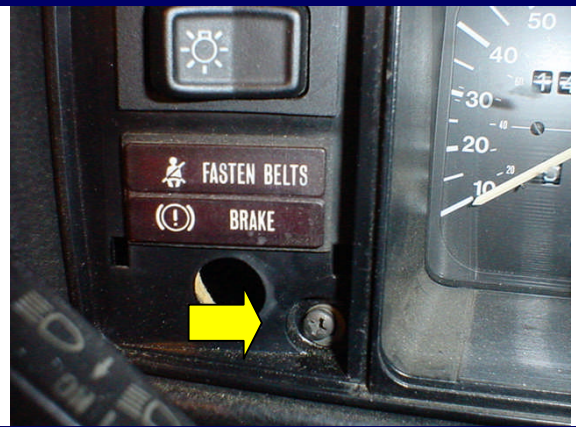
10. Remove all of the switches (press in their locking tabs, push/pull them out of the bezel and pull off their wiring harnesses – don't forget the fan switch!).

Note: It would be wise to cover the two independent wire connectors for the hazard switch with electrical tape. If these two touch each other or bare metal, they can cause a short and blow a fuse, especially if you did not disconnect the battery in Step 1.



11. Using your Phillips screwdriver, remove the six bezel screws:

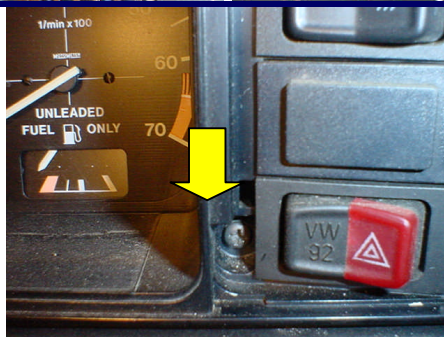
- One at lower left.



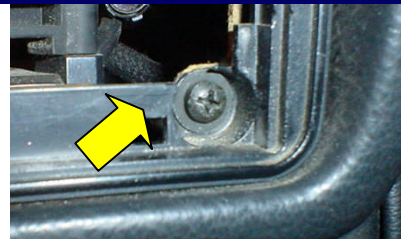
- Two above the instrument cluster.



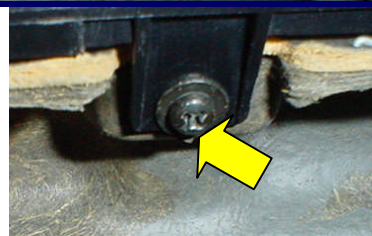
- One at the bottom, in the middle (next to the hazard switch).



- One at lower right.



- One at the top, above the HVAC controls.



Dash bezel can now be removed.

12. Remove the two instrument cluster screws.
13. Reach behind the left-side of the instrument cluster and remove the speedometer cable (early cables are screw-on, later cables are push-on and require a tab be pressed while pulling the cable off).



14. Carefully tilt the instrument cluster towards you and remove the wiring harness; carefully pull the cluster out.

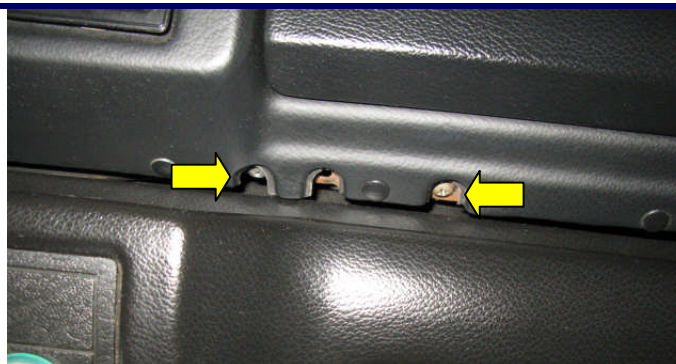
Note: Pulling the instrument cluster out and removing the dash is made easier by removing the steering wheel (those with airbag steering wheels will need to disable the airbag first).



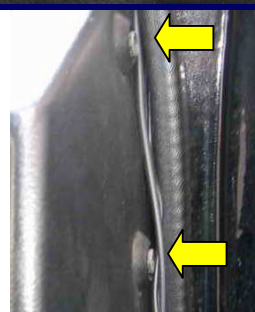
15. Disconnect the side vents from their plastic pipes (you may need to reach up from underneath to remove the passenger side).

16. Remove the 4-6 screws holding the bottom of the dash onto the metal support frame.

Note: Removing these screws often-times requires removal of the kneebar unless you have the proper screwdriver to get at them. If this is required, skip down to the kneebar removal section, remove the kneebar and come back here to step 15 to resume dash removal.



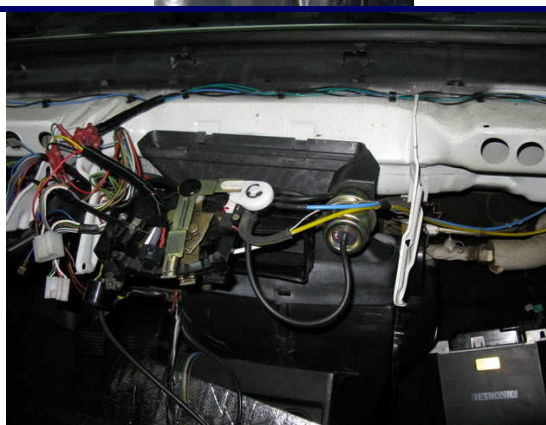
17. Open both doors as wide as possible, and using your 8mm wrench, remove the two bolts at each end of the dash.



18. Dash can now be pulled out of the car (be wary of the tabs along the windshield cowl).

Installation is essentially reverse of removal.

Warning: For those working with airbag-equipped cars, do **not** reconnect the battery until the instrument cluster has been fully reconnected and/or unless you disconnected the [airbag harness connector](#) at the relay panel in Step 1.

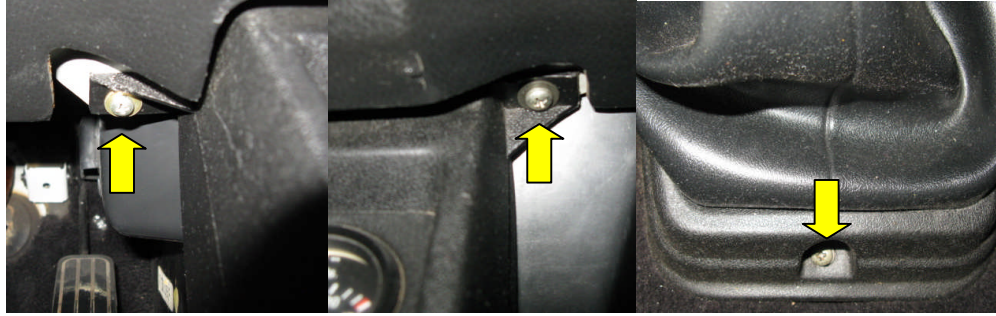


Kneebar Removal

Tools needed:

- 13mm wrench or socket wrench (socket version is highly advised)
- Phillips screwdriver(s)
- Small flathead screwdriver or interior trim removal tools
- Removal of the front seats is advised, but not required

Step 1



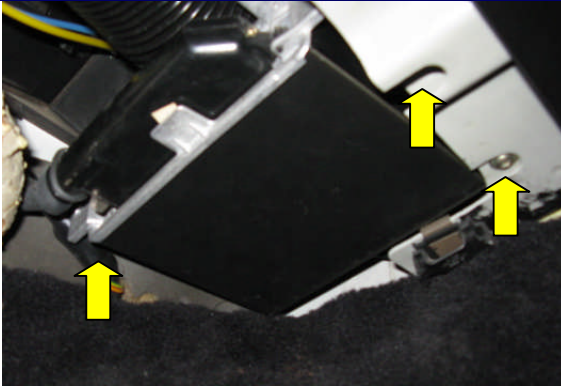
A) Remove the center console's 3 Philips screws. B) Remove the shift boot. C) Carefully tilt and slide the console back a bit. If you wish to remove it completely, you will need to disconnect the gauge wiring (if gauges are installed); the console will not pull out far enough for you to easily do this (i.e. you will have to disconnect them by reaching in behind). If you have a lighted cassette storage box (1990+), pull the box out and disconnect the light wiring. If you have power top and/or power window switches in the console, pry the switches out, label them, and unplug them.

Step 2 ~ 1990+



If your car has power window switches in the kneebar: Carefully pry out the power window switches (label them "left" and "right" so that they get reinstalled in the correct places), and unplug them.

Step 2 ~ K-Jetronic (CIS-lambda)



Remove the Jetronic control unit from the passenger side of the kneebar: Remove the 3 Philips screws holding the control unit to its bracket. No need to unplug the control unit; simply place it on the floor.

Step 3



Remove the two 13mm nuts and two 13mm bolts from each side of the kneebar (this means there are 8 total that require removal, 4 per side). These nuts and bolts are located directly up under and behind the kneebar.

Step 5

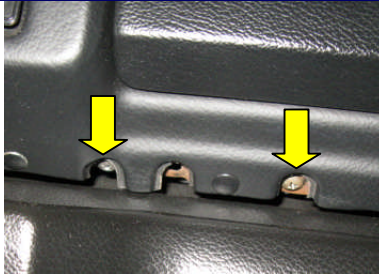
If installed in kneebar...

- Cig lighter/ashtray: Reach behind and disconnect the wiring. Note: This will be a bitch to do if this your first time removing the kneebar. Have a buddy handy, or find something to rest the kneebar on.
- Power window switches: Reach behind and remove the rubber grommet and wiring.

Carefully pull kneebar out.

Beware: kneebar is heavy; it is also vinyl-covered which can be easily damaged.

Step 5 Note



If the kneebar refuses to budge, you may need to remove screws along the top of the kneebar/bottom of dash.

Remove the 4 (give or take, this will depend on your specific car and whether the screws are still in place) Philips screws holding the dash to the kneebar.

When reinstalling, you can, if desired, leave these screws out for easier future removal of the dash and/or kneebar.

Step 6

Installation is reverse of removal.

* * Remember, **you** are responsible for working on **your** car; Cabby-Info.com, "Black_cabbie", VWvortex.com, VAG, VWoA, or anyone else are not responsible if **anything** goes wrong while **you** are working on, in and under **your** car!
Use this information at your own risk!* *