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### ***Lock & Catch components***

There is an old adage that locks only keep out honest people but this does not deter vehicle manufacturers from installing ever more complicated electronic systems that simply cannot be overridden without “professional” equipment and special components. Some of the most irritating faults occurring in modern vehicles involve failure of door and tailgate locks. At worst, they can activate the alarm and/or immobiliser system, leaving the vehicle effectively stranded without the services of an authorised dealer to replace the faulty part and reset the computer.

This article deals only with the most common problems where owner input can prevent or solve a lock failure. The best advice, regardless of model, is *preventative maintenance* meaning routine adjustment and repair *before* failure occurs. Fixed early, the cost and inconvenience will be minor. After failure, they can be very serious indeed. The signs to watch include:

- Sounds of loose bolts inside the doors or tailgate – one of the most common causes of failure.
- Intermittent failure of electrical door/tailgate controls
- Excessive wear of remote control devices and/or intermittent failure to activate the locks

#### ***Classic Range Rovers***

Door locks on early Range Rover models rarely gave trouble but loose bolts on the mechanical tailgate systems were the most common cause of problems. This is a DIY fix. Simply unscrew the cover plates and tighten the screws holding the lock mechanism to the frame. Adjusting the components that latch onto the side frames is a bit more complicated, but within the ability of most owner. Remove the cover strips to expose the long rods connecting the latches to the centre unit. Give everything a good dose of Rostof or equivalent to remove the inevitable rust, then with 2 small spanners, adjust the strikers until they “click” simultaneously when the button is pushed.



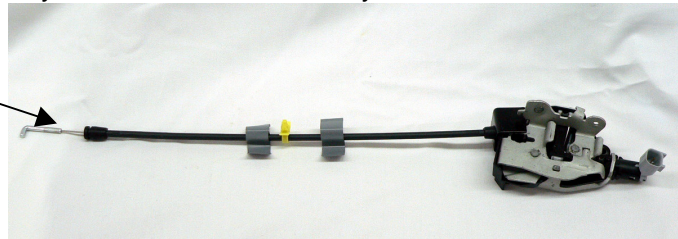
Open and close the latch by hand when adjusting the rods

Later classic models were equipped with central locking systems that included the tailgate lock. However, the latter is a fairly simple affair the only change being to the centrally mounted actuator. Most problems arise when the mounting screws work loose but in some cases locking the vehicle at the doors fails to lock the tailgate – overcome in the short term by manually turning the tailgate key into the horizontal position. To rectify the problem, replace the actuator and/or repair the wiring.

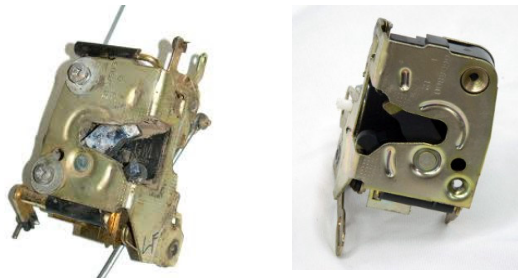
### *Discovery locks & catches*

Tailgate locks rarely give trouble, other than actuator failure in central locking models. On D3 and D4 models however, the pin at the end of the tailgate latch is notoriously weak and is prone to snapping off. It is simple to replace but care **MUST** be taken when removing the trim, because the star clips cost nearly \$4 EACH and break easily.

Pin will  
break here



D3 and D4 door locks are generally reliable and the combined lock/actuator is fairly simple to replace. Take care with removal of door trims for the reason stated above



### *The p38 Range Rover*

Many component failures are caused by work hardening of the plastic to which they are attached. If the tailgate lock does not rattle, it has probably fallen off! However, if the actuator fails, it is simple to replace after removing the trims. The release button rarely gives trouble but the components most prone to failure are the upper-to-lower tailgate latch (right hand picture below) and the lower tailgate actuator (bottom picture),



P38 (side) door locks/actuators will benefit from occasional cleaning and oiling due to influx of road dust. The illustrations are the front door (left) and rear door (right) actuators



### *Range Rover Sport and LM models*

To date, the locks on these models have proved to be relatively trouble free. However, as with all central-locking models activated by remote control units, it is the remote that causes most of the problem, due to damage and wear. Complete failure can result in being locked out of an immobilised vehicle.

The solution is to GET A SPARE UNIT when purchasing the vehicle. This, and a spare set of keys should be kept in a safe place.

### *Remote control units – all models*

As noted above, make sure you have a spare unit. A replacement remote can cost over \$1000 and will require the resetting of the security system by an authorised dealer.

On early models, these had replaceable batteries, However, on the D2 and early Sport models, it is important to USE the spare remote regularly, because its battery is kept charged through the ignition system .

### *Prevention is better than cure*

Routine servicing is essential for trouble-free ownership. At the first sign of any looseness or rattling of components inside a door or the tailgate, it is advisable to have an expert check for the cause and rectify it. Paying for an hour's labour at this stage can prevent serious inconvenience and cost later.

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