

Side Panel Fabrication

It seems like "forever", the side panel on the driver seat, you know--the one with the position control switches, on the XC90 always cracks and breaks into two pieces after heavy use. Not that I'm "that" fat, mind you, just short legs and for me, it's a stretch to get on/off the high XC90 seat.



Broken Side Panel

So I headed to Volvo of Cary to procure a replacement. Well, the 2010 SE XC90 has heated and cooled seats, hence extra controls. Mark, the parts guy, said the special order SE seat panel was \$75, but the in-stock standard panel, \$25.



Standard Side Panel

The SE panel has an extra opening for the seat cooling and message controls. Fifty bucks for a hole I could cut myself, so here's that story.

I made a cardboard template for the bezel from the opening in the original panel, traced the pattern on the new "standard" panel; then cut the opening with a Dremel tool, installed the switch bezel and voilà, a SE seat side panel.



Template on New Side Panel



Bezel Cut Lines



Completed Fabrication

Suggestion: cut the panel with a plastic hot knife and trim it with a 0.25" single edge milling tool in a hand held Dremel tool or a smooth cut flat and round file.



End Mill Bit



Hot Knife

I expect the replacement side panel to break in about a year. The bezel hole structurally weakens the side panel. The subsequent replacement will have cutouts for the top and side switches to maximize the structural integrity of the panel. The bezel is not needed.



Bob sez: A project well done and done right is always about the tools. You must have the tools, a bit of confidence, experience, motivation and time to do a job right. The result is priceless: pride in accomplishment.

Bob lives in Cary, NC; he is co-chairman of the Blue Ridge Chapter of VCOA.

Contact him at rfsepe@gmail.com or 919-417-5019 with questions about your Volvo project.