

Add A Light to Your Center Console Storage Box

By Jim Short

Ever want to find something in your Miata's center console storage box at night, but it was just way too dark to see? I found with our '91 that this situation can be remedied by simply rearranging the location of a relatively useless ash tray light. This seldom seen feature is activated with the first click stop of your light switch, and thanks to a restricted cut out, only emits a small glow for it's originally designed purpose. Being a non smoker and having added an after market cup holder years ago, this light was virtually lost and forgotten.

Here's what you can do to shed some new light into your storage box. Begin by removing the five screws that secure the rear center console and locate the wires leading to the lamp and housing ahead of the ashtray well. Disconnect the wires from the power source at the fitting provided and lift off the console, maneuvering it around the trunk and gas lid release levers.

With the console now free, remove the lone machine screw that attaches the black plastic housing and lamp to the console's underside. There's no need to remove the lamp from the housing. The rectangular O.D. dimension of the housing I found to be approximately 5/8" x 7/8" with one side being a little wider than the other. Be sure of your units precise dimensions because the objective is to cut a new rectangular opening in the storage box in which to snug your lamp and housing. The next trick is to transfer the exact rectangular shape dimension to the dark recess of the storage box.

Start by making a paper template cutout of your measured lamp housing using a sheet of paper and a single edged razor blade. After discarding the cutout, does your lamp unit closely fit through the template? Next, reduce the size of the template so it can be held flush to the inside front and towards the top of the storage box. This will accommodate the housing's integral screw flange located on the reverse side of the box. There's no need to cut and remove this flange or the wider length portion of the housing. In fact, this wider lip serves as an ideal protective lamp hood.

With the template held in place, simply dab (not draw) white out around the perimeter of the cutout which, when removed, should reveal a perfect outside white line. Carefully and slowly score the sharp guide lines with your single edge razor blade. Repeat the scoring several times before making your final insertion cuts using a narrow blade razor knife, the plastic is tougher than you think. With the plastic coupon finally removed, press the lamp and housing from the back of the console (wider length hood side up) in an angular fashion to allow for the housing's front hook like tab. You may choose to remove this appendage altogether. If your initial cutout is too small carefully shave off additional plastic. Once your lamp housing is projecting through the console wall sufficiently enough, it can be secured further in the back by either adding a small strip of duct tape or glue to insure it doesn't come loose. Finally, click the electrical connectors back together, adjust the surplus wire and reattach the console and you're finished.



Let there be light in your center console storage box.



We came! We saw! We Sundaed! These club members had a good time at the August 'Sundae' mingle. Some 'ran for the cold', some just showed up for the treats. And you know what we always say... "You should have been there!"