

1987 Ford Ranger Manual Transmission



1987 Ford Ranger manual transmission vehicles are often celebrated for their rugged reliability, simplicity, and the engaging driving experience they provide. The Ford Ranger, introduced in 1983, quickly became a popular compact pickup truck, appealing to a wide range of consumers due to its versatile design and practicality. The 1987 model, a part of the first generation of Rangers, continued to build on the strong foundation laid by its predecessors. This article will delve into the specifics of the 1987 Ford Ranger manual transmission, covering its features, specifications, performance, and maintenance, as well as why it remains an appealing choice for enthusiasts and collectors today.

Overview of the 1987 Ford Ranger

The 1987 Ford Ranger was part of a period of significant change and development for Ford's compact truck lineup. The Ranger was designed to compete with other popular small pickups such as the Chevrolet S-10 and the Dodge D150. It was available in various configurations, including different cab styles, bed lengths, and engine options.

Body Styles and Configurations

The 1987 Ranger was available in several configurations, making it suitable for different needs and preferences:

- Regular Cab: A two-door cab that offered a straightforward, no-frills approach.
- SuperCab: A four-door extended cab providing additional space for passengers and cargo.

- Bed Lengths: The truck was available with standard and long bed options, catering to varying utility needs.

Engine Options

The 1987 Ford Ranger offered a variety of engine options, with choices that appealed to different driving styles and requirements:

1. 2.0L I4 Engine: An economical option that produced around 84 horsepower, ideal for basic hauling and commuting.
2. 2.3L I4 Engine: This engine provided a slight power upgrade, delivering approximately 100 horsepower, making it a popular choice for those needing a bit more performance.
3. 2.9L V6 Engine: A more powerful option, the V6 produced about 145 horsepower, appealing to those seeking better performance and towing capability.

Manual Transmission Specifications

One of the standout features of the 1987 Ford Ranger was its availability with a manual transmission, providing drivers with a tactile and engaging driving experience.

Transmission Types

The 1987 model offered two primary manual transmission options:

- Four-Speed Manual Transmission: This was the standard option for most base models, providing a good balance between drivability and control.
- Five-Speed Manual Transmission: Available as an upgrade, this transmission allowed for smoother highway cruising and better fuel efficiency at higher speeds.

Transmission Features and Performance

The manual transmissions in the 1987 Ford Ranger were designed to be robust and reliable, catering to the needs of both casual drivers and those who enjoyed spirited driving. Key features included:

- Short Shifter: The transmission was equipped with a short-throw shifter that provided precise and quick gear changes, enhancing the driving experience.
- Clutch System: The clutch system was designed for durability and ease of use, with a pedal feel that balanced lightness and feedback.
- Gear Ratios: The gear ratios were optimized to ensure a good balance between acceleration and fuel efficiency, making the Ranger suitable for various driving conditions.

Driving Experience

Driving a 1987 Ford Ranger with a manual transmission is an experience that is cherished by many enthusiasts. The engagement provided by shifting gears manually creates a connection between the driver and the vehicle that is often lost in automatic transmissions.

Handling and Performance

The Ranger's compact size and lightweight design contributed to nimble handling and good performance characteristics. Key aspects of the driving experience include:

- Responsive Steering: The steering system provided good feedback, allowing for confident cornering and maneuverability.
- Suspension Setup: The Ranger featured a solid front suspension and leaf spring rear suspension, offering a comfortable ride while maintaining the ability to handle loads.
- Power Delivery: The manual transmission allowed for direct power delivery to the wheels, providing a feeling of control, especially in off-road situations or during towing.

Fuel Efficiency

Manual transmissions typically offer better fuel efficiency compared to their automatic counterparts, and the 1987 Ford Ranger was no exception. The combination of a lightweight body, efficient engines, and a manual gearbox meant that owners could expect respectable fuel economy figures:

- 2.0L I4: Approximately 25-30 miles per gallon.
- 2.3L I4: Approximately 24-28 miles per gallon.
- 2.9L V6: Approximately 20-25 miles per gallon.

Maintenance and Longevity

Proper maintenance is crucial for ensuring the longevity of the 1987 Ford Ranger, especially regarding the manual transmission. Here are some tips for keeping the transmission in good working order:

Regular Fluid Changes

- Transmission Fluid: It is essential to check and change the transmission fluid regularly, as this fluid lubricates and cools the internal components. Consult the owner's manual for recommended intervals.

Clutch Maintenance

- Inspect Clutch Wear: Regularly check the clutch for signs of wear, such as slipping or difficulty shifting. If any issues arise, it is advisable to replace the clutch components promptly.

General Inspection

- Visual Checks: Regularly inspect the manual transmission for leaks or damage. Addressing minor issues early can prevent more significant problems down the road.

Why Choose a 1987 Ford Ranger Manual Transmission?

The 1987 Ford Ranger with a manual transmission remains a highly regarded choice for several reasons:

- Engaging Driving Experience: The manual transmission provides a more interactive and enjoyable driving experience compared to automatics.
- Simplicity and Reliability: The mechanical nature of manual transmissions means fewer electronic components that can fail, leading to a reputation for reliability.
- Affordability: Older manual transmission vehicles like the Ranger are often more affordable to purchase and maintain than their automatic counterparts.
- Nostalgia and Collectibility: For many enthusiasts, the 1987 Ranger represents a simpler time in automotive history, making it a sought-after collectible.

Conclusion

In summary, the 1987 Ford Ranger manual transmission stands out as a remarkable vehicle that combines practicality, performance, and an engaging driving experience. With various configurations, reliable engine options, and a robust manual transmission, it remains a beloved choice among truck enthusiasts and collectors. Whether you are looking for a reliable workhorse or a nostalgic classic, the 1987 Ford Ranger is a model worth considering, offering a blend of character, functionality, and driving joy that continues to resonate today.

Frequently Asked Questions

What type of manual transmission was available in the 1987 Ford Ranger?

The 1987 Ford Ranger was equipped with a 5-speed manual transmission, commonly the Mazda M50D.

How do I check the transmission fluid level in a 1987 Ford Ranger?

To check the transmission fluid level, locate the dipstick near the rear of the engine, pull it out, clean it, reinsert it, and then check the fluid level marked on the dipstick.

What are common issues with the manual transmission in a 1987 Ford Ranger?

Common issues include difficulty shifting gears, grinding noises, and fluid leaks which may indicate worn synchronizers or seals.

What is the recommended transmission fluid for a 1987 Ford Ranger?

The recommended transmission fluid for a 1987 Ford Ranger with a manual transmission is typically 75W-90 gear oil.

How can I improve shifting performance in my 1987 Ford Ranger's manual transmission?

Improving shifting performance can involve regular maintenance, ensuring the clutch is properly adjusted, and using high-quality transmission fluid.

Is it possible to swap the manual transmission in a 1987 Ford Ranger for an automatic?

Yes, it is possible to swap a manual transmission for an automatic, but it requires significant modifications including a new transmission mount, linkage, and possibly an ECU reprogramming.

What clutch components should I replace when servicing the manual transmission in a 1987 Ford Ranger?

When servicing the manual transmission, it's advisable to replace the clutch disc, pressure plate, throw-out bearing, and inspect the flywheel for wear.

Where can I find a repair manual for my 1987 Ford Ranger manual transmission?

Repair manuals for the 1987 Ford Ranger can be found at auto parts stores, online retailers like Amazon, or downloadable from websites specializing in automotive repair resources.

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