Installing the backlit SRT airbag in a 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT

Parts / Tools Required

5RX61XRAD001 – backlit SRT airbag from 2015 Red Vapor edition JGC
18-22 gauge solid (not braided) wire (2-3 feet or so)
18-22 gauge butt splices (two of them)
small diameter heat shrink tubing
small nylon tie straps (3-5 of them)
electrical tape
#2 phillips screwdriver
wire stripper / crimper
small flat bladed screwdriver
small wire cutter

Instructions

As with any work on or near the airbag you need to make sure you disconnect the negative battery cable. Let the system discharge for at least two minutes prior to trying to remove the airbag. I don’t want to be held responsible for any accidental airbag discharge while performing this upgrade. Keep in mind that this upgrade will go nowhere near the wiring for the dual stage airbag but let’s be safe just in case. Likewise, the only way the new airbag will fail to deploy is if you forget to reconnect the two airbag connectors when it the upgrade is complete. There is no risk of this airbag being “rejected” by your Jeep due to it being a 2015 airbag in a 2014 Jeep.

Believe it or not, figuring out how to get the airbag off took the most time. I read the instructions for airbag removal in the trim removal instructions on wk2jeeps.com but there still seemed to be a disconnect between those instructions and my 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee. The instructions state that there is a hole on either side of the steering wheel from which you will access the airbag retention clips. This is only partially true. The holes exist but aren’t trimmed out and it wasn’t until I started feeling around on the cover did I notice where they were. Once you feel where the hole is (or shine a bright light on the wheel and you will see it) just poke the phillips screwdriver through it carefully. The other hole is in the same spot on the other side of the wheel.
Now that the holes have been located, inserting the screwdriver into the hole at the correct angle to disengage the spring clip is the tough part. Start by studying your new airbag. You will see the access holes in the sides that guide you to the small diameter wire that you need to press to disengage the airbag.

I found it beneficial to pull on the airbag cover in the direction away from the wheel while you are trying to disengage the retention spring. You will know when it disengages as that side will pop free. Repeat the process for the other side.

Tip: I actually took the silver bottom spoke trim covers off the wheel when I was looking around to find the access holes and found that this helps you guide the screwdriver towards the retention spring if you pry back on the non-metallic steering wheel cover. Be careful as the cover material tears easy!

Once free, disconnect the horn switch connector and the airbag connectors.

To remove the airbag connectors, pry up on the orange retention plugs then remove the connectors. To remove the horn switch connector, pry up gently as shown while pulling the connector out in the image at right below.
With your stock airbag off we can start on prepping the wiring for the installation of the new airbag. I can’t speak for the wiring on the non-Red Vapor 2015s but it should be the same as the 2014s. The instructions below are for 2014 SRTs.

Since the backlit airbag has a four pin connector on it (for horn switch and backlit SRT logo wiring) and the 2014 airbag only has a two pin connector, we need to make a jumper harness and swap the two pin and four pin connectors.

Cut and remove the tie strap holding the four pin connector to the back of the airbag. Don’t worry you can use a new tie strap to re-secure the connector when we are finished.

Start by removing the four pins from the blue backlit airbag connector by gently prying up on the L-lock on the connector. Once the pin retention lock is removed you can use a small, flat bladed screwdriver to press down on the four triangle shaped features in the holes while pulling on the wires from the back.

Push down with small flat blade screwdriver in each of the four cavities to release the connector pins

Pry up to release L-lock

Here is what the four pins do.

Yellow wire – horn switch signal
White wire – 12V supply
Brown wire – backlit SRT logo illumination signal (basically another 12V signal)
Black + red wire – joint ground for horn switch and backlit SRT logo

Repeat the same process to remove the two pins from the old airbag connector as we will be transferring that connector to your new airbag.
Once you have removed the old two pin connector from the old airbag you can insert the black + red wire pin into the bottom pin location and the yellow horn switch signal wire into the top pin location as shown below. Pay careful attention to the two pin connector orientation and which wire goes into which slot as it has to match up with the male connector in the steering wheel.

Attach butt splices to each of the other two wires and crimp to secure. I wanted to keep the pins as-is just in case which is why I didn’t cut them off and strip the wires. Add heat shrink tubing or electrical tape over the butt splices and pins to ensure they don’t come in contact with one another. Set the airbag aside and move onto the jumper harness.
Now we need find a suitable 12V source as well as a switch illumination signal to connect to these last two wires. There are a few possible options in the steering wheel harness but I chose the white, 10-pin connector as circled below.

Cut the left side tie strap (green in my steering wheel) to free the connector and allow you to pull it towards you to improve access. Once free you can unplug the connector to gain access to the male side. Go ahead and remove the pin retention device (looks like a 10 fingered comb) and set it aside.

Cut two, 18-inch long pieces of 18-22 gauge solid wire and strip a small section of insulation off of both ends. Insert the end of one wire into the top side of pin #5 (pink switch illumination signal wire) such that it comes in contact with the top of the pin in the connector. Insert the end of the other wire into the top side of pin #7 (white wire/red stripe) which is fused 12V power. When finished you should have something similar to what is shown in the image above right.
With the two “bonus” wires in pins 5 and 7 there is no way the 10 fingered comb is going back in so I broke of the 5\textsuperscript{th} and 7\textsuperscript{th} finger of the comb and pushed it back into the connector to secure the pins. Secure the two new wires to the other wires using a narrow piece of electrical tape and a small tie strap as shown in the image below right.

When you are confident those two new wire taps won’t become dislodged from the connector you can reconnect it to the female side and push it back up into the top of the steering wheel. I routed my two new wires around the top of the inside of the steering wheel and made a gentle “U” back to the connections on the airbag.

Connect and crimp the pin 5, switch illumination wire, to the brown wire on the airbag. Likewise, connect the pin 7, fused 12V power wire, to the white wire on the airbag. Secure the two pin connector and the two jumper wires to the back of the airbag using a new tie strap and the existing tie strap connector.

Here’s where you get to check your work. WITHOUT connecting the two airbag inflation connectors, reconnect the negative battery cable and turn your vehicle light switch to either the parking lights on or headlights on position and the SRT logo should illuminate. If not, make sure your jumper wires didn’t become dislodged and that all your connections match mine. When I put my airbag back in I actually dislodged one of mine which forced it not to work. That is when I went back and taped and re-secured the jumper wires where they came out of the 10-pin connector. If your SRT logo illuminates as designed then you can disconnect the negative battery cable again, wait two minutes and reconnect the two airbag inflation connectors and push the airbag back into place in the steering wheel. Just line it up and push it in and that is all it takes. You should not be able to pop if free by pulling on it. Reconnect the negative battery cable and ensure the SRT logo works as well as your horn.

Congratulations! You’re finished!

Contact me with any questions at CWGrizzwold@gmail.com