



Kubistar - Trapped Starter Motor

There was a Nissan badge on this van, and it proudly displays the name Nissan Kubistar, but to all intents and purposes this vehicle is a Renault Kangoo van.

The van was in because the starter motor had failed. Just like the van that bears the Renault badge, the starter motor sits at the back of the engine and will not come out past the driveshaft. The starter itself is quick enough to unbolt, but then the trick is finding a suitable route to remove it from the engine bay.



With the driveshaft out of the way, there was plenty of access to remove and refit the starter motor

The option which I believe to be the easiest, and the one we naturally chose, was to remove the driveshaft. The shaft fits on an external spline from the gearbox, so no oil is lost in the process.

With the shaft removed, there is plenty of room to remove and refit the starter unit. Once the new unit was in place and the drive shaft reinstalled, the Nissan/Renault was ready for the road.

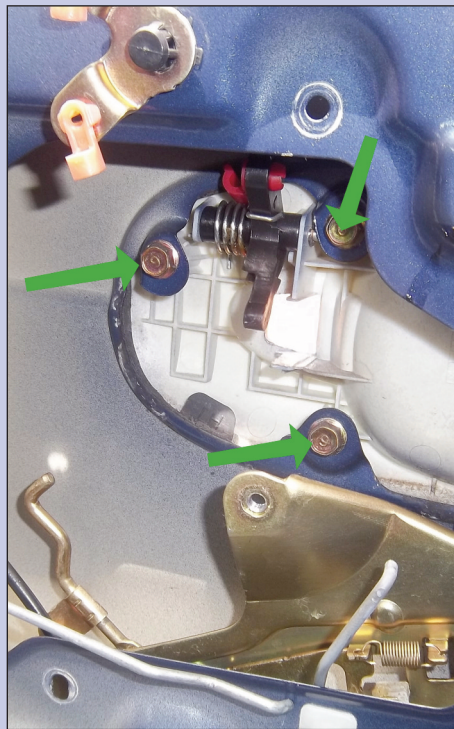
Kia Sedona - Easily Accessed Broken Side Door Handle

The Kia Sedona is a great vehicle for carting a growing family around. Reasonably priced with plenty of space the motor can easily accommodate plenty of kit. It is also versatile enough to be used as a van by removing the seats.

This 2004 Sedona was used to carry four rugby playing offspring backwards and forwards. Gentle was not in their vocabulary, and the door handles felt the full brunt of the entry and exit.

Continued abuse of this nature will take its toll on even the most robust of objects, and the handle eventually came off in one of the passenger's hands. He, of course, protested strongly that it wasn't his fault.

The design of the Sedona means that such things are easily fixed. Once the inner door panel was removed, there was a large amount of access to the door handle fixings and replacement took very little time. The new handle was in and operational in less than half an hour, ready for the next phase of abuse.



The fixings were easily accessed once the interior trim panel was removed

Fiat Punto - The Driver Should Have Stopped



The failed seal on the temperature sender, at top, resulted in damage to the engine block, at bottom.

This is a situation that could have been avoided if the driver had heeded the warnings given by the vehicle. Unlike some modern vehicles, this 2003 Fiat Punto actually has a fully operational temperature gauge. The driver watched the needle go right up to the top and then slowly go down to zero.

As the needle descended so did the power from the engine, it wasn't until the power dropped below the level that would drive the car along, that the owner finally gave up and stopped.

The source of the problem was a failed seal on the temperature sender outlet, the temperature gauge had begun to rise when the coolant started to escape, it had then gone down when there was insufficient coolant in the system to immerse the sensor.

The small leak from the cooling system was easily rectified by replacing the temperature sender unit. The result of the overheating was less easy to remedy. We at first thought that a new head gasket would be required, but once the cylinder head was off we discovered far more damage.

One of the pistons had picked up on the bore, ruining the cylinder block. A second hand engine was sourced and the owner given a quick lesson on acting upon information from the temperature gauge.