

## LEVEL CHECK

♦ See Figures 145 and 146

Check the automatic transaxle fluid level at least every 15,000 miles or 12 months. The dipstick can be found on the left (driver) side of the engine compartment. The fluid level should be checked only when the transaxle is hot (normal operating temperature). The transaxle is considered hot after about 20 miles of highway driving.

1. Start the engine, set the parking brake, and put the transaxle selector lever in the P position.

2. Move the selector lever through all the positions and return to the PARK position. **DO NOT TURN OFF THE ENGINE DURING THE FLUID LEVEL CHECK.**

3. Remove the dipstick, wipe it clean and then reinsert it firmly. Be sure that it has been pushed all the way in. Remove the dipstick again and check the fluid level while holding it horizontally. With the engine running, the fluid level should be in the cross-hatched area.

4. If the fluid level is below the crosshatched area (engine hot), add MERCON®III automatic transaxle fluid through the dipstick tube. This is easily done with the aid of a funnel. Check the level often as you are filling the transaxle. Be extremely careful not to overfill it. Overfilling will cause slippage, seal damage and overheating. Approximately 1 pint of ATF will raise the fluid level into the cross-hatched area.

The fluid on the dipstick should always be a bright red color. If it is discolored (brown or black), or smells burnt, serious transaxle troubles, proba-

bly due to overheating, should be suspected. A qualified technician should inspect the transaxle to determine the cause of the burnt fluid.

## Automatic Transmissions

### FLUID RECOMMENDATIONS

Motorcraft Mercon ATF (Automatic Transmission Fluid) XT-2-QDX or equivalent Mercon ATF fluid (Dexron Mercon III) is the only fluids recommend for use in the automatic transmissions of the vehicles in this book.

### PAN & FILTER SERVICE

♦ See Figures 147 thru 159

The fluid should be changed according to the schedule in the Maintenance Intervals chart. If the car is normally used in severe service, such as stop and start driving, trailer towing, or the like, the interval should be halved. If the car is driven under especially nasty conditions, such as in heavy city traffic where the temperature normally reaches 90°F (32°C), or in very hilly or mountainous areas, or in police, taxi, or delivery service, the fluid should be changed according to the severe service schedule.

➔ **To drain the automatic transmission fluid, the fluid pan must be removed.**

1. Raise and safely support the vehicle.
2. Place a drain pan underneath the transmis-

sion pan, then remove the pan attaching bolts except on the four corners of the pan.

3. Loosen the four attaching bolts on the corners approximately four turns each, but do not remove them.

4. Very carefully pry the pan loose on one corner. You can use a small prybar for this if you work CAREFULLY. Do not distort the pan flange, or score the mating surface of the transmission case. You'll be very sorry later if you do. As the pan is pried loose, all of the fluid is going to come pouring out.

5. Carefully break the other corners loose until fluid is flowing steadily from the entire pan.

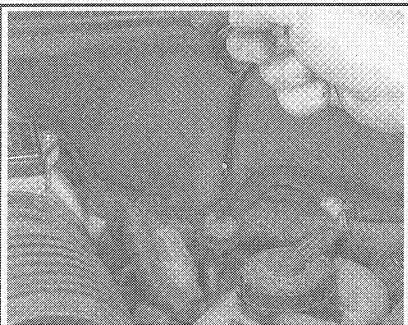
➔ **If the drained fluid is discolored (brown or black), thick, or smells burnt, serious transmission troubles, probably due to overheating, should be suspected. Your car's transmission should be inspected by a reliable transmission specialist to determine the problem.**

6. After the fluid is down flowing, remove one corner bolt and attempt to drain any remaining fluid. Remove the remaining bolts and remove the pan and gasket.

➔ **On some later models, the transmission pan gasket is reusable, do not throw it away.**

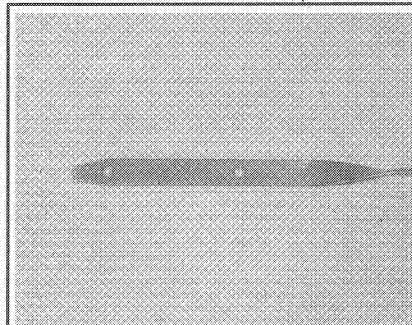
7. Clean the pan and the magnets with solvent and allow them to air dry. If you use a rag to wipe out the pan, you risk leaving bits of lint behind, which will clog the dinky hydraulic passages in the transmission.

8. Remove and discard the filter and the O-ring seal if applicable.



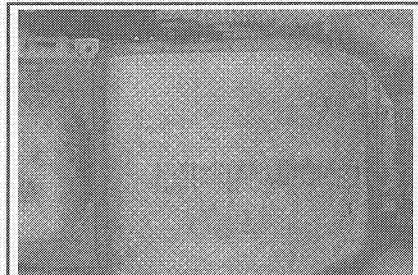
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Fig. 145 Automatic Transmission dipstick location—Continentials



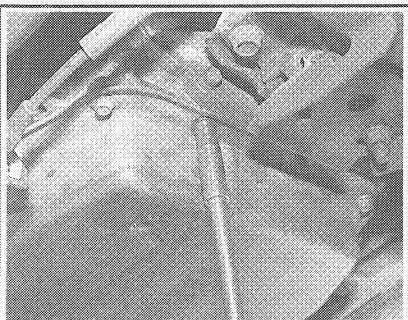
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Fig. 146 The dipstick is easy to read and well marked. Do not add if level is in the crosshatch area



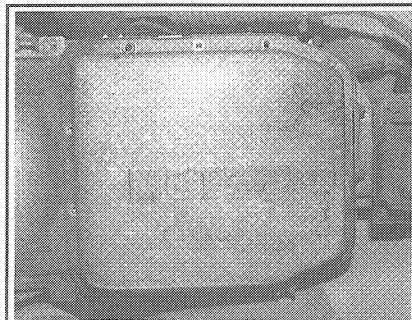
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Fig. 147 The transmission pan is held to the transmission case by retaining bolts. Typically the retaining bolts require a 10mm socket



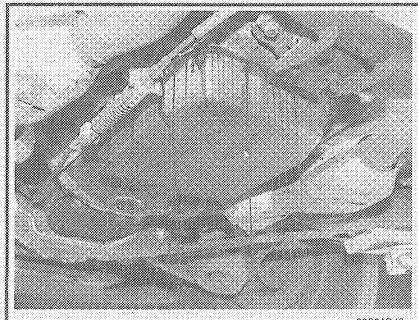
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Fig. 148 Remove the retaining bolts on the transmission pan except . . .



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Fig. 149 . . . for the bolts on the four corners of the pan



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Fig. 150 Slowly loosen the four corner bolts and lower the pan. As the pan is lowered, fluid will begin to pour out