

PLUNGER TUBE INSTALLATION

9 CHAPTER

The 1911 plunger tube installation is a job that most hobbyists have no need to worry about. Like the front sight, this requires specialized tools. It is included here for informational purposes so that the reader may become more educated in this particular area and converse with the gunsmith intelligently should the need arise.

First of all, removal of the plunger tube generally requires that it be ruined. The two posts that hold it on are swaged inside the frame and normally require considerable force to remove. This force could bend the pins, crush the tube itself, or bend it beyond repair. The hobbyists should never need to remove this part, but should check the part frequently to make certain that it is secure. If the plunger tube ever came loose, the spring loaded plunger inside could slip past the thumb safety on the outside, locking it in a safe position. This would not be dangerous, unless of course you wanted to use the gun to defend your life. Then the consequences would be disastrous.

Removal of the plunger tube is accomplished by clamping it in a smooth faced vise and pulling it off. A bit of wiggling and prying may be required, but make sure the frame is not marred in the process. This will no doubt ruin the tube requiring its replacement.

Replacing the tube is done by first opening up the inside of the chamfer of the holes inside of the magazine well. I like to use a 1/8" carbide ball burr in a high speed air grinder, but a Dumore hand grinder and a small grinding wheel could be used. This increase of chamfer size allows more metal to be swaged on the ends of the posts to offer a more secure installation.

Make sure the plunger tube is installed properly with the small hole toward the muzzle. It will go on backwards. Next, fit a .109 to .110 drill bit or rod inside the rear of the plunger tube to prevent it's being crushed. Make certain this rod is a bit larger than the plunger that will be expected to fit when the job is finished.

The plunger tube, supported inside, is also protected outside with a piece of steel. Press the plunger tube firmly against the slide, and then clamp the down with the plunger tube installation tool. Repeat for the other pin. Check for swaged posts interfering with the magazine and file off, or re-swage to eliminate any problem here.

