

Towing setup for Maverick

I've documented my Baseplate install, complete with links to most of the other items I used. I have an old BrakeBuddy Classic that is over 20 years old, and I like its simplicity and don't mind its bulk. So take this all for what it is worth to you. I had an easy tow for 2622 miles last fall with my 2023 Maverick, towing with a 2021 LTV Wonder RL (2020 Ford Transit 350-HD chassis).

Here we go:

Which to use? Blue Ox, Roadmaster, or Demco? For me, the choice was obvious.

Blue Ox designed an essentially 2-piece baseplate. It is very wide and you must cut your fascia to install them. Hard to make it pretty. Here is what that looks like:



I was planning on using Blue Ox as the “lesser of 2 evils” between it and Roadmaster (until the Demco was released). But then people discovered that if you have a hard stop, the connections are so very wide, they put outward stress on 2 connection plates and the plates have bent and welds have broken. There are pictures in the MaverickTruckClub.com of failed Blue Ox baseplates, and Blue Ox reportedly would not cover them under warranty.



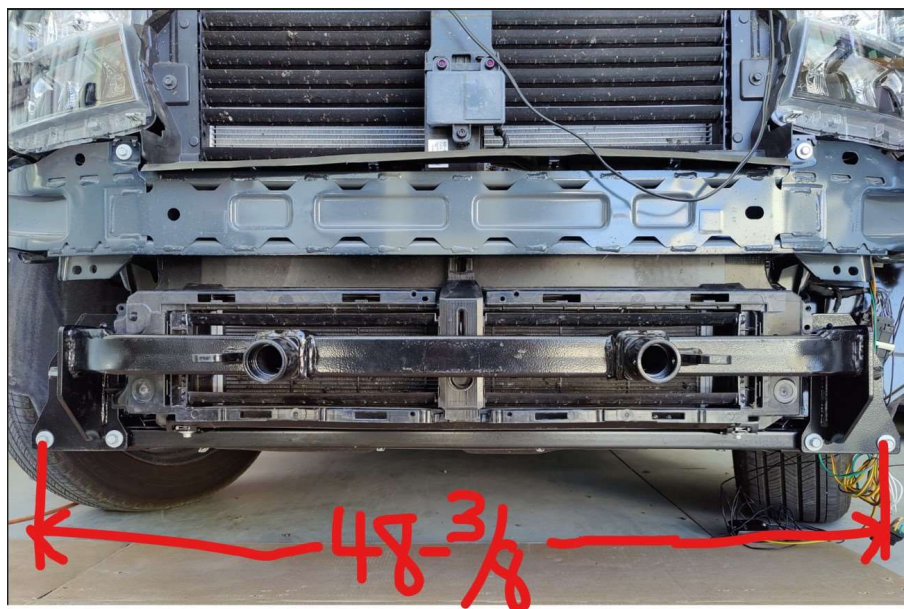
This is the 9th baseplate install I have done on my own vehicles since 1999. I have always used Roadmaster in the past. But for the Maverick, Roadmaster was never a consideration for me. Roadmaster requires that you cut off the entire lower active-shutter frame and vanes from the Maverick.

See Roadmaster’s Installation instructions for Baseplate #524470-5, page 10, figures N and O.
<https://www.roadmasterinc.com/content/pdfinst/524470-5.pdf>

While I personally do not think it has a big effect on the truck, Ford states that these shutters serve 2 purposes: 1. Improve EPA mileage and 2. Enhance engine temperature control. That second one is a “warranty denial” waiting to happen in my opinion, and at least one person in the MTC was warned by his dealer that a Roadmaster install would be cause to deny a warranty claim. I’m sure the warranty denial would have to be related to heat, but I am also sure I did not want to have to argue with Ford’s lawyers whether the removal of the shutter system caused a problem.

I knew that Demco was working on a baseplate, and while I was planning on doing a Blue Ox install (the failures had not yet been reported), the Demco baseplate was finally released in September, 2023.

I ordered directly from Demco, as the other distributors did not yet have them in stock and I had an October 2023 trip planned. I’m glad I did, as there were issues. I believe I was the first install after their test vehicle, and the plate they sent had the mounting holes spaced incorrectly, they were too wide at 49”. Demco sent a second one that worked perfectly:



Demco's full install instructions are at <https://cdn.demco-products.com/documents/Manuals/TP29360.pdf> Downloading that now will be helpful as you continue reading, as I make references to it in this next section.

Demco's install manual was pretty skimpy. My comments are in addition to their manual's instructions, so you will want to have those at hand as you read further.

E-Trailer (and others) have videos as to how to take the fascia off <https://www.etrailer.com/Base-Plates/Ford/Maverick/2022/RM97RR.html#exp-productdetails=.all-description>

I think the eTrailer video skips the 2 pushpins noted in the Demco manual, step 1, below, so be sure to note them.

The Demco manual online is from 6/23 and does not reflect some issues I and another brought to them during our September 2023 installs.

Demco does not mention the lower active-shutter vanes at all. I'll talk about them below. The shutter assembly is left intact, as the vanes remove without damage to them or the shutter system.

Demco does not show re-installation of the fascia at all, but there really wasn't anything odd except as noted below.

Here are my observations following the Demco Installation Document Steps:

Step 1: Be sure you remove those 2 pushpins shown as well as the bolts. The fascia will pull past them and when they release with the two tabs (shown in Roadmaster videos), you might be taken off balance (ask me how I know). The fascia is surprisingly light and I did not need a second person.

Step 2: I do not remember removing the accordion item at all.

Step 3: Demco is clear and correct.

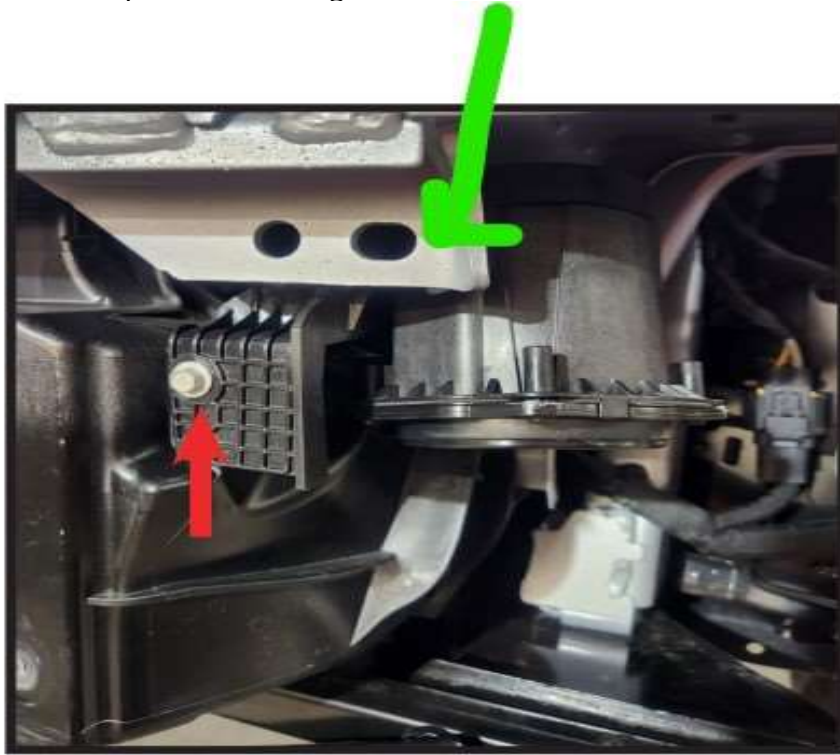
Step 4: Besides the 3 bolts and the pin at the outer edge, there is a clip between the 2nd and 3rd bolt that needs to be released with squeezing. See the etrailer youtube/etrailer video, it will be helpful. This was a little difficult for me to get it to release (one on each side).

Step 5a: Take note that the two pieces are woven/keyed together, so when you put the fascia back on later, it needs to be keyed back together before you push the fascia all the way back on and the grill pieces into the headlights, or you might have a struggle. This was the only difficult part for me.

Step 5B: Demco left out that the grill pieces on the headlights have three plastic connectors holding the grill (part of the fascia) and they must get popped out of the headlights VERY CAREFULLY. The Etrailer video is much better to see this.

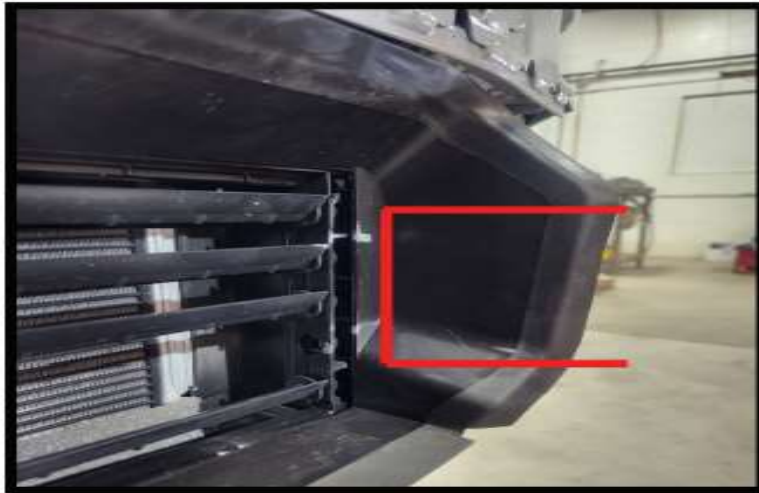
Step 6: There is only one electrical connector, on the passenger side, down low.

Step 7: Shows the PAD which needs removal. It also shows a better location to put it back as noted below in step 14. I used the green hole to re-mount it instead.



Step 8: This shroud is removable to work on. Just release the 8 clips that hold it onto the truck. I should have considered just leaving it off, which is what the instructions were for my 2017 Ford C-Max that has a similar shutter system. Were I to do it over, I believe I would choose to just leave it off entirely. Then if I ever removed the baseplate, reinstalled the vanes and the shroud, there would be nothing to buy to put it back into stock condition.

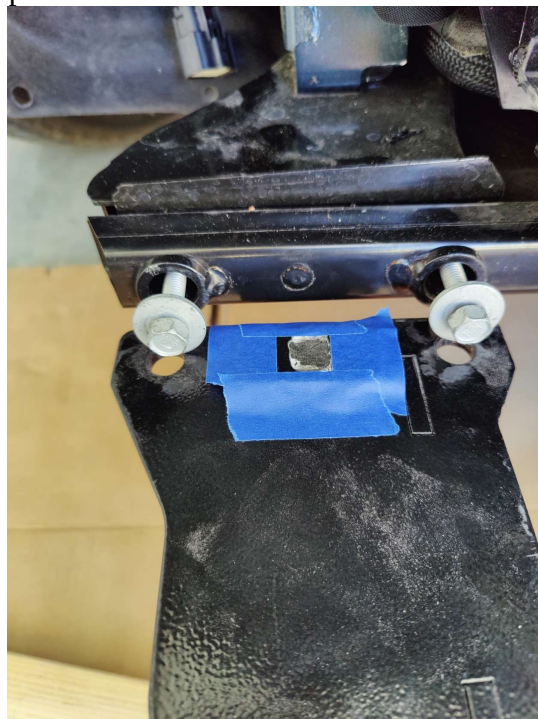
You see the area that needs to be cut out. This item is a plastic oval, with a rubber outer edge. What I did was to cut a slit in the rubber on each side and then cut out the plastic to make room for the baseplate bar. Thus the rubber still seals the airspace as intended. Not a problem to make a cut of both the plastic and the rubber like Demco shows, I just wanted to be a little neater.



8. Cut the air dam as shown on both sides of the vehicle.

WHILE the shroud is off, do step 9 and step 10. I did not have to trim anything on the passenger side, and minimal trimming was required on the driver's side

Before you continue, examine the mounting area for the 2 bolts on the passenger side. While the Demco picture is smooth, at least 2 of us have had spot welds on the Maverick that would interfere with the baseplate properly seating in the area. Not knowing exactly why the weld was there, I chose not to grind it off, but to grind out the little support/spacer plate that Demco has welded to the back of the baseplate to accommodate the weld. I just taped off the area and used a Dremel tool to make space for the weld. Picture is in mid process.



Follow steps 11 and 12.

At this point, I **test fit** the baseplate onto the 4 mounting bolts, tightened them (not torqued and no locktite!).

I then carefully examined the active shutter vanes. You will find the bottom vane on each side will be intact, the 2nd from the bottom will already be missing because Ford took it out, the 3rd from the bottom is out of sight behind the baseplate, and the 4th from the bottom will very likely be laying on top of the baseplate.

That was my cue that both the 3rd and 4th vanes required removal so that the baseplate would not impede their travel and cause a problem with the entire moving system. I removed them following Ford's recall instruction paper. (The instructions on how to remove the vanes without damage and start on page 7). This was part of an old recall where Ford decided that the system was too closed up. This told the dealers how to remove vanes from both the upper and lower active shutter system. I think ALL 2023s and all 2024s have the vane removed at the factory. The top vanes (5th from bottom) can stay just fine.

<https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/rcl/2022/RCMN-22V484-1315.pdf>

Removing them this way would allow you to return them without a problem if needed, unlike the Roadmaster which does irreversible destruction.

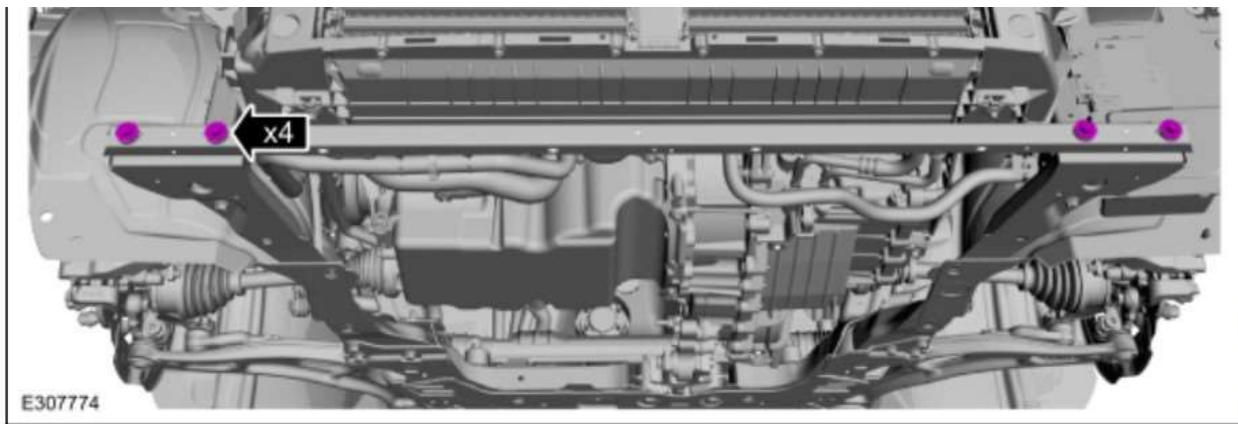
Step 13: It was NOT necessary to drill this 3/8" hole in the PAD. **Caution: Do not turn the truck on without the PAD connected and the front electrical connection intact. If you do, you will get several error codes and a Check engine light.**

Step 14: **No, No, No.** When you try to reinstall the PAD (with the new 3/8" hole), you will realize 2 things. First, the bolt/nut Demco provides is too short to add the PLASTIC PAD mount, so you would have to go get a longer bolt. Second, I realized that putting that plastic mount tab in the bolt-brace-bracket-nut assembly, and then torquing it to 50 ft-lbs, was a recipe for failure. I did not want to torque a plastic sandwich. If you look at step 14 closely, you will see a hole in the upper left of the picture (actually 2 holes). The existing hole in the PAD will allow you to re-mount it right there in that outer hole. I used a small bolt and nyloc nut from my junk drawer to mount it in that hole.

Step 15: Notice that the plastic PAD mount shown in step 14 is not anywhere in Demco's picture #15!

At this point, I removed the baseplate and completed the shroud cutting. Just remember to go back and put the supplied locktite on the threads and torque the bolts, once you are happy to leave the baseplate installed.

The upper brace requires 50 ft-lbs of torque, the lower 4 Metric bolts are, according to the Ford Service Manual, to be set at 30 ft-lbs. The lower torque number was not shown in Demco's torque table, so I looked it up in the Ford Service manual:



11. On both sides.
Remove and discard the bolts and remove the front outer side member.
Torque : 30 lb.ft (40 Nm)

Putting the fascia back on is simple, just make sure the lower pieces are meshed together properly. The electrical will be a pain to decide where and how to install it. Notice that Demco's final picture has NO Electrical showing at all. They included a way-too-big and heavy 6-pin mount. I bought a lighter one. I ran the wires down the driver's side underneath, so they came out in the cutout area of the shroud while I finished up.

The end result:



Here are the other items I bought:

6-pin black plastic socket: <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001GN6PMW/> I trimmed the plastic tab and mounted it upside down as shown.

Mounting plate: <https://www.amazon.com/57208-Connector-Socket-Mounting-Bracket/dp/B00537FDSY> This plate is pushed forward into the grill space and secured by 3M VHB tape .

Charge wire with fuse and diode: <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004RCXB8A/>

Hopkins Breakaway switch (power wire clipped as not needed:

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0049MKPSW/> I painted the end with black spray paint before installation

Trailer wire is easy to find, so no link

I used this set of diodes for the taillights: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/385511304724> Much easier to install than the spendier Roadmaster diode set.

I use a Roadmaster Falcon 2 towbar, but their prices really fluctuate and I really don't have a preference. So no link for the towbar. You don't need the crossbar that comes with the Falcon 2 for the Maverick Demco install. I do use that crossbar on my Jeep. Maybe you can buy a Falcon 2 without the crossbar.

I used a Roadmaster RM-034 adaptor set between the Falcon 2 and the Demco:

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B003VAVZQ4/>

