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› [Rugged Ridge](#) /

› [Rugged Ridge Steering Box Brace Instruction Manual](#)

## Rugged Ridge 18021.02

# Rugged Ridge Steering Box Brace Instruction Manual

Model: 18021.02

## INTRODUCTION

This manual provides detailed instructions for the installation, operation, and maintenance of your Rugged Ridge Heavy Duty Steering Box Brace, Model 18021.02. Designed for 1976-1986 Jeep CJ7 and CJ8 models equipped with power steering, this brace is engineered to enhance steering stability by holding the steering box firmly in place under extreme stress. Please read all instructions carefully before beginning installation.



Image: The Rugged Ridge Heavy Duty Steering Box Brace, featuring a black powder-coated bar with a clamp on one end and a mounting bracket on the other.

## SAFETY INFORMATION

**WARNING: This product can expose you to chemicals which are known to the State of California to cause cancer and reproductive harm. For more information, go to [www.P65Warnings.ca.gov](http://www.P65Warnings.ca.gov).**

Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment, such as safety glasses and gloves, during installation. Ensure the vehicle is securely supported on jack stands before working underneath. Disconnect the battery before performing any electrical work. Follow all local safety regulations and guidelines.

## PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS

Attribute	Detail
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Model Number	18021.02
Product Name	Heavy Duty Steering Box Brace
Brand	Rugged Ridge
Material	Steel
Finish Type	Black Powder Coated
Product Dimensions (L x W x H)	23 x 5 x 1 inches
Item Weight	3 pounds
Compatibility	1976-1986 Jeep CJ7 and CJ8 with power steering
UPC	804314076856
Country of Origin	Taiwan

## INSTALLATION (SETUP)

This section outlines the general steps for installing the Rugged Ridge Steering Box Brace. Specific vehicle configurations may vary, and professional installation is recommended if you are unsure about any steps.

### Tools Required:

- Standard wrench set
- Socket set
- Torque wrench
- Jack and jack stands
- Safety glasses and gloves
- WD-40 or similar lubricant (optional, for stubborn bolts)

### Installation Steps:

1. Park the vehicle on a flat, stable surface and engage the parking brake.
2. Safely lift the front of the vehicle using a jack and support it securely with jack stands.
3. Locate the steering box on the driver's side frame rail.
4. Identify the mounting points for the steering box brace. One end of the brace will attach to the frame, often utilizing an existing shackle hanger bolt, and the other end will clamp around the steering gearbox.
5. Loosely install the frame-side bolt(s) for the brace. Some users report needing a coarse-thread 7/16" x 14 bolt for the rear hole on the passenger side, as the supplied bolt may be fine-thread.
6. Position the clamp end of the brace around the steering gearbox.
7. Install the bolts, washers, and nuts for the clamp end, ensuring a snug fit around the gearbox.
8. Once all bolts are in place, progressively tighten all fasteners to the manufacturer's recommended torque specifications. Ensure the brace is securely holding the steering box without causing undue stress or misalignment.
9. Lower the vehicle safely.
10. Test the steering for proper operation and ensure no new noises or vibrations are present.

*Note: Some installations may require minor adjustments or modifications due to vehicle age or previous modifications.*

## OPERATION

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The Rugged Ridge Steering Box Brace is a passive component designed to reinforce the steering box mounting. Once properly installed, it operates continuously to reduce flex and movement of the steering box, contributing to improved steering feel and reduced "steering wander" or "death wobble" common in older Jeep CJ models. No active user operation is required after installation. The brace works in conjunction with your existing power steering system to provide a more stable and responsive steering experience.

## MAINTENANCE

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Regular inspection of the steering box brace is recommended to ensure continued performance and safety.

### Maintenance Schedule:

- **Every 3 months or 3,000 miles (whichever comes first):**
  - Visually inspect the brace for any signs of damage, cracks, or corrosion.
  - Check all mounting bolts for tightness. Re-torque if necessary according to the vehicle's service manual or general automotive torque specifications for the bolt size.
  - Ensure the brace is not interfering with any other vehicle components.
- **After any off-road excursion:**
  - Perform a quick visual inspection for impacts or damage from debris.

Clean the brace periodically with mild soap and water to remove dirt and grime, especially if exposed to harsh conditions like road salt or mud. The black powder-coated finish is designed for durability but can be compromised by severe impacts or prolonged exposure to corrosive elements without cleaning.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

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This section addresses common issues that may arise after installing the steering box brace.

Problem	Possible Cause	Solution
Steering still feels loose or has excessive play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loose mounting bolts.</li><li>• Incorrect installation or alignment.</li><li>• Other worn steering components (e.g., tie rods, ball joints, steering gear itself).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Re-check and re-torque all mounting bolts.</li><li>• Review installation steps to ensure correct fitment.</li><li>• Inspect other steering and suspension components for wear and replace as needed. The brace addresses steering box flex, not other component wear.</li></ul>
New noises or vibrations after installation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brace contacting other vehicle components.</li><li>• Loose fasteners.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inspect for clearance issues and adjust brace position if possible.</li><li>• Ensure all bolts are properly tightened.</li></ul>
Difficulty installing bolts or achieving proper fit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thread incompatibility (e.g., fine vs. coarse thread).</li><li>• Frame or steering box variations due to age or previous modifications.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Verify bolt thread type and size. A 7/16" x 14 coarse-thread bolt may be needed for some frame holes.</li><li>• Minor grinding or persuasion may be required for older vehicles, as noted by some users.</li></ul>

If issues persist, contact Rugged Ridge customer support or consult a qualified automotive technician.

## OFFICIAL PRODUCT VIDEO



Video: An official video from Rugged Ridge showcasing the spirit of adventure associated with Jeep vehicles and the range of accessories they offer. This video highlights the lifestyle aspect of Jeep ownership and the role of Rugged Ridge products in enhancing that experience.

## WARRANTY AND SUPPORT

Rugged Ridge products are backed by a limited warranty. For specific warranty terms and conditions, please refer to the warranty information included with your product packaging or visit the official Rugged Ridge website.

For technical assistance, installation questions, or warranty claims, please contact Rugged Ridge customer support:

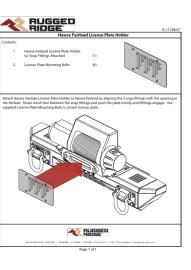
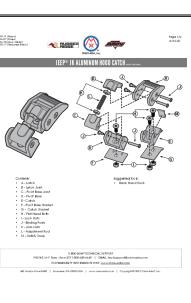
- **Website:** [www.RuggedRidge.com](http://www.RuggedRidge.com)
- **Phone:** Refer to the website for current contact numbers.
- **Email:** Refer to the website for contact email.

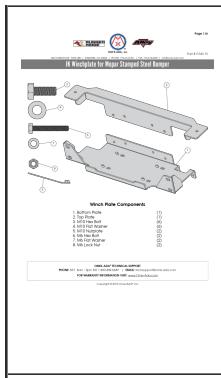
When contacting support, please have your product model number (18021.02) and purchase information readily available.

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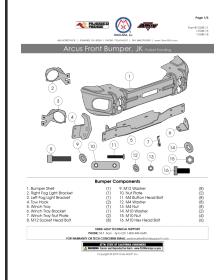
## Related Documents - 18021.02

	<p><a href="#">Rugged Ridge Track Sliders for Jeep Seats Installation Guide</a></p> <p>Detailed installation instructions for Rugged Ridge Track Sliders (P/N: 13201.03) for Jeep CJ5, CJ7, and Wrangler models (1976-1995). Includes parts list, tools required, and safety warnings.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Rugged Ridge Hawse Fairlead License Plate Holder Installation Guide</a></p> <p>Instructions for installing the Rugged Ridge Hawse Fairlead License Plate Holder (IS-11238.07) onto your winch fairlead. Includes parts list and mounting steps.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Rugged Ridge Jeep JK Aluminum Hood Catch Installation Guide</a></p> <p>Step-by-step installation instructions for the Rugged Ridge Aluminum Hood Catch for Jeep JK models. Includes parts list, suggested tools, and important notices for proper fitment and safety.</p>



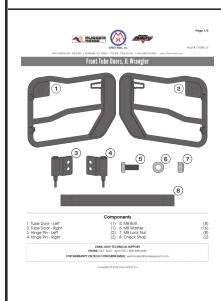
### [Rugged Ridge JK Winchplate Installation Guide for Mopar Stamped Steel Bumper](#)

Detailed installation instructions for the Rugged Ridge JK Winchplate, designed for Mopar Stamped Steel Bumpers. This guide covers component identification and step-by-step assembly for Jeep JK models, including part number 11543.15.



### [Rugged Ridge Arcus Front Bumper for Jeep JK Installation Guide](#)

Comprehensive installation guide for the Rugged Ridge Arcus Front Bumper (JK) by Omix-ADA. Includes parts list, component details, and step-by-step instructions for Jeep Wrangler JK models.



### [Rugged Ridge Front Tube Doors for JL Wrangler Installation Guide](#)

Step-by-step installation guide for Rugged Ridge Front Tube Doors (Part # 11509.13) for the Jeep Wrangler JL, including component list, installation steps, and optional mirror information.