

FOUR WHEELER

THE WORLD'S LEADING 4x4 AUTHORITY

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Armadillo Taco: Stout Trail Armor for a 2017 Toyota Tacoma

Toyota loyalists have been relishing the aftermarket goodies available for the third-generation Tacoma. Since the current model launched in 2015, the aftermarket companies have ramped up an array of functional products from suspension upgrades to armor protection. Now, if we could only get a factory TRD supercharger for the mildly-powered 3.5L V-6, we'd be ecstatic!

For the build at hand, we chose a '17 Toyota Tacoma 4x4 TRD Sport longbed with the 140.6-inch wheelbase. We camp a ton, so the longbed was key to our purchasing decision and has enough room for all of our gear. But, stout bumpers and rocker protection are lacking on the new Taco. The factory front bumper cover is formed plastic and behind the cover is injected foam, mainly for crash protection. It's pretty wimpy! The rocker panels have zero protection and are completely exposed to the elements and would cave in at the first soccer ball-sized rocks they contact. And finally, the factory rear bumper is, well, it's there.

For the '15-current Toyota Tacoma, Off Camber Fabrications (OCF) manufactures a slick modular front and rear bumper, as well as a solid rocker guard. The front bumper is a five-piece bolt-together unit that requires minor trimming to the front fascia. The main front section of the OCF front bumper, below the grille, allows the placement of a 28-inch Rigid Industries E-Series spot/flood combo LED lightbar. The tubular corners offer up enough room to place two 3-inch square Rigid Dually flood and spot LEDs on each side. This truck will light up the night.



The longbed is great for utility, but the added wheelbase puts the rocker panels in harm's way off-road. OCF manufactures modular (two-piece) rocker guards that bolt up to the framersails without any modifications. They're heavy-duty and will protect the rocker panels from crunching on terra firma.

To manage the multiple LED lights and future electrical demands, we installed Precision Designs' newest sPOD on the Tacoma. The sPOD includes a switch panel, harness, and distribution center. There's no need to splice into the factory wiring and potentially void your truck's warranty. Most of your electronics will simply bypass the battery, such as; lights, fridge/freezer, race radio, and so on.

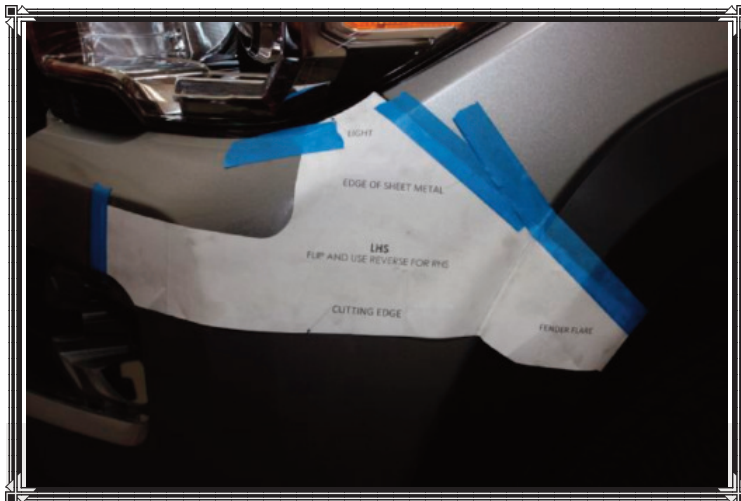
Duval Offroad Designs in Newbury Park, California, handled the installation chores, but all of the OCF parts we installed can be bolted up in your driveway with simple tools. Follow along as we hit the installation highlights of these products on our '17 Taco in preparation for some serious overlanding. As Toyota suggests, "Let's go places!"



Beginning at the front, we removed the entire factory bumper cover and disconnected the factory fog light wiring. The lower aluminum crossmember unbolts and the factory holes are then utilized for the Off Camber Fabrication (OCF) bumper.



OCF's front modular bumper ships in four pieces, which significantly reduces shipping costs. The tubular corner sections are manufactured from 1.75-inch-thick tubing, along with 10-gauge steel mounting brackets. The 12-gauge steel center section protects vulnerable components.



OCF includes a template to cut the front fender and bumper cap in order to line up with the new front bumper. There's little room for error, so exact placement is critical.



The lower half of the bumper cap is discarded. Make sure to measure twice and cut once. It takes a steady hand, but as long as you don't flinch, you'll make a straight cut.



The center section and corners are adjustable, enabling you to line them up to the grill and the trimmed factory plastic cover, below the headlights.



The factory skidplate on the Tacoma is wafer thin and we've already customized it with an obstacle. The OCF skidplate is manufactured with heavy-duty 12-gauge solid steel and it bolts up to the factory location protecting the underbelly from rock rubs.



Rigid Industries' 3-inch square Dually LEDs fill the void in the tubular corners, with one spot and one flood on each side. Each Dually puts out 1,568 raw lumens and only draws 1.45 amps. The center section is set up to accept Rigid's 28-inch E-Series LED combo LED lightbar, which puts out a whopping 12,880 raw lumens and only draws 11.16 amps.



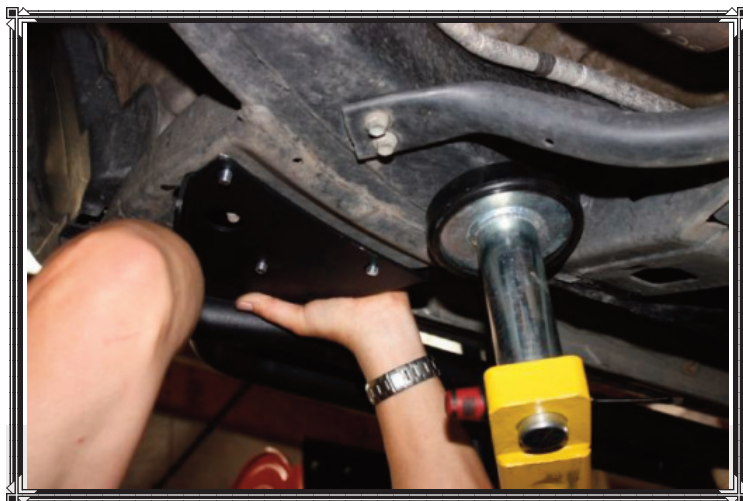
Once installed, the rear OCF bumper flows nicely with the factory rear quarter panels and tailgate. The factory towing components stay functional.



OCF's rear bumper ships in two pieces and bolts up to the factory mounting location. Thick-walled 1.75-inch-diameter tubing and heavy-duty 10-gauge steel mounting brackets are included. Also included are mounting tabs for the factory backup sensors (if factory optional) and additional reverse lighting.



The three remaining mounts on each rock rail attach with inner brackets that wrap around each framerrail and are bolted using the supplied hardware. Once torqued to spec, the rock rails are ready to take some serious abuse.



The rock rails attach to four locations on each framerrail, ensuring a solid base. The front mount on each rock rail utilizes a stout body pad on each side of the truck, located behind the front wheelwells, with three bolts for a secure connection.

Sources

Duval Offroad Designs
805-375-7551
dodoffroad.net

Rigid Industries
Mesa, AZ 85215
855-760-5337
www.rigidindustries.com

Precision Designs
661-775-7799
4x4spod.com

Off Camber Fabrications
888-636-7223
offcamberfabrications.com



To avoid frying the factory electrical system, we installed sPOD SourceSE by Precision Designs with their new HD switch system.

Features:

- The system utilizes automotive grade approved high-power, high-temp, ultra-reliable components with a maximum 100 amp capacity!
- The sPOD SourceSE is a fully programmable digital CAN-Bus controlled system utilizing state-of-the-art technologies.
- OEM vehicle specific simple installation hardware, engineered and 100% manufactured in the United States.
- Eight circuits rated @30amps @12.5vdc per circuit and an “End-User” friendly terminal block for attaching accessories.
- Expandable (Daisy Chained select-able) to up to 32 circuits with simple plug-n-play features!
- Low voltage cutoff (LVCO) battery protection circuit has spec voltage cutoff at 11.2 VDC with a two-minute delay before shutting down the SourceSE.
- The system will protect from 1.5 amps to 30 amps automatically. The SourceSE incorporates a failsafe self-healing fault protection system. Fuses have been eliminated (for all accessory outputs) and replaced with current-sensing MOSFETs controlled by a microprocessor.
- One single ATM mini-style fuse for LVCO protection and reset.



OCF's rock rails are designed as two-piece units and bolt together at the center section. OCF manufactures two rock rail options, a shortbed and longbed version. The rails bolt on, using existing holes and cradles to the frame. With the longbed Tacoma, the wheelbase extends to 140.6 inches, which is a lot of real estate to expose on the rocker panels, so the OCF rock rails have them covered.