

FOUR WHEELER

THE WORLD'S LEADING 4x4 AUTHORITY

Article by: Stuart A. Bourdon

Bolt-In EVO Jeep JK Chromoly Cage Kit



Once you begin off-roading with any sort of regularity and enthusiasm it becomes clear through first-hand experience, observance of another's mistake, or just plain common sense that replacing or augmenting the factory tube cage (if it has one) is a really good idea. The Jeep Wrangler JK offers a decent tube cage right out of the factory, but as we have suggested, eventually your thoughts turn to getting something better. EVO Manufacturing has a pretty good option in its EVO MFG Chromoly Sport Cage kit (P/N EVO-1156).

The kit features A-pillar supports, a dash crossmember, upper cross bar, center bar, connector plates; all are formed from chromoly steel for the ultimate strength and durability. Installation is easy but not quick. It requires trimming of some interior pieces and drilling into body sheetmetal and factory cage tubes.

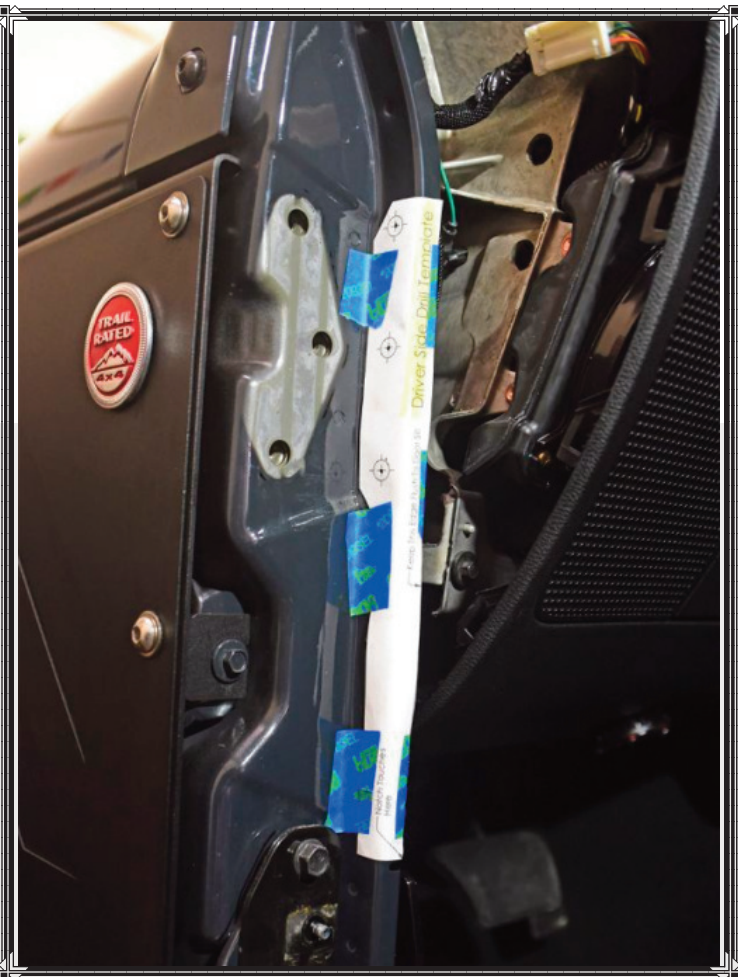
A standard tool set, drill and drill bit set, Torx set, and Dremel or barrel sander are needed for installation. We strongly recommend you test-fit parts before painting or powdercoating and thoroughly read the instructions before starting this project. The kit comes with hardware, but some factory hardware is reused during installation, so don't go chucking it into the trash right away. Follow along as we walk you through the major points of our installation of the EVO Manufacturing Chromoly Sport Cage.



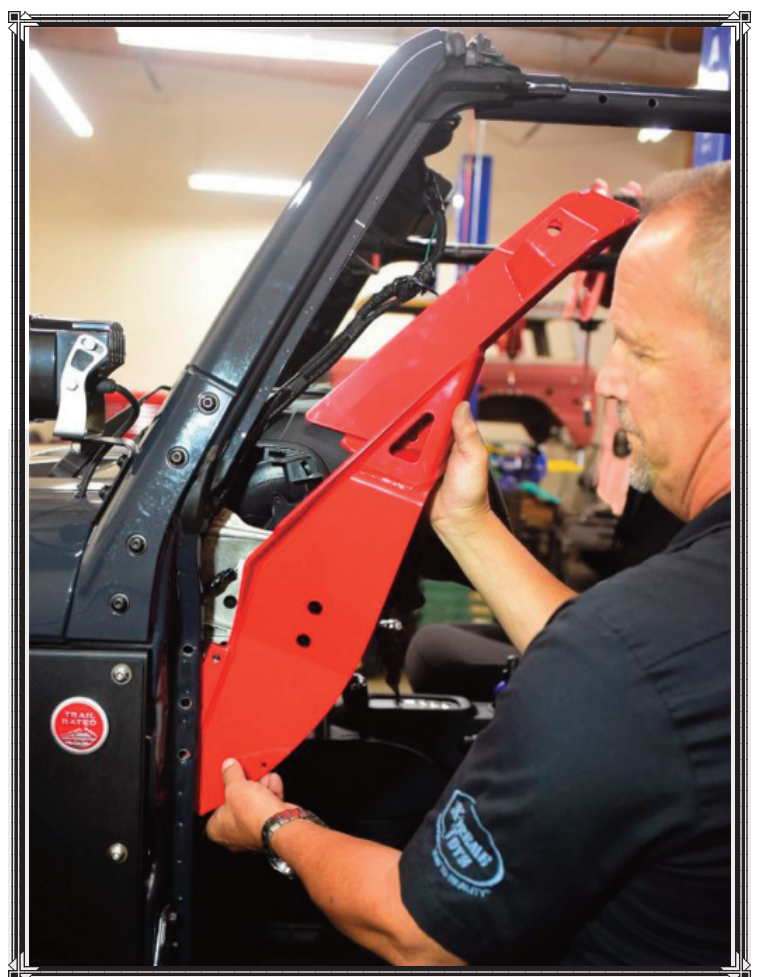
The EVO MFG Chromoly Sport Cage kit (seen here with optional B-Pillar Cross Bar, C-Pillar Cross Bar, and Sport Cage Rear Bar) adds a couple notches' worth of structural integrity, strength, and security to the factory Jeep Wrangler JK tube cage. All components were test-fit, then powdercoated in Red Baron by California Coating prior to installation at the Duval Offroad Designs facility. Although a full day of work, the kit bolted up easily. Installation does require some drilling of sheetmetal and tubes, as well as trimming of a few plastic parts here and there.



The windshield visors and the plastic panels in the upper corners of the A-pillars on each side of the dash and along the windshield frame must be removed, and the wiring harness needs to be loosened in preparation for the EVO MFG Chromoly Sport Cage (P/N EVO-1156) installation. The plastic panels that fit in the upper corners of the A-frame and windshield have to be trimmed per the installation instructions to accommodate the EVO A-Pillar Support Bars.



The doors should be removed to make this install easier. The kit includes a template for the three holes that must be drilled in each of the front door sills for the EVO MFG Chromoly Sport Cage A-Pillar Support Bars. The paper template included in the installation instructions shows exactly where to punch and drill the holes.



Only one EVO MFG A-Pillar Support Bar can be installed before the EVO MFG Dash Cross Bar is in place. We began with the driver side and maneuvered the A-pillar support bar into place, and then loosely bolted its bottom end.



The foam pads on the factory tubes over the front doors have to go (for now), and if you have a sound bar it will also have to be removed to allow for installation of the EVO MFG Upper Cross Bar and Center Bar.



The EVO MFG A-Pillar Support Bar is also connected to the upper factory cage system through kit-supplied EVO MFG Connector Plates.



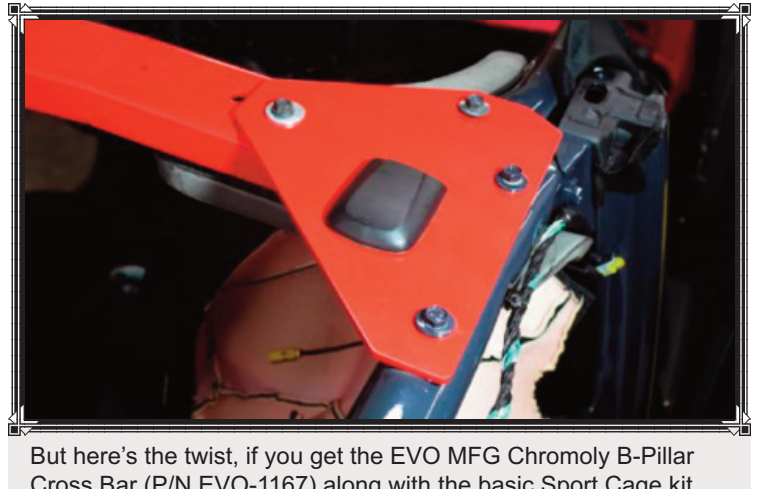
The EVO MFG Dash Cross Bar should be installed before both A-pillar support bars are installed. This makes the job a lot easier. All the hardware should be left loose enough to make small fitment adjustments prior to tightening down the a-pillar supports, connector plates, and dash cross bar.



Installation of the EVO MFG Upper Cross Bar was next. The upper cross bar spans the factory tubes above the front doors and is mounted just behind the previously installed connector plates. Some drilling of the factory tubes above the front door is required for installation of the upper cross bar.



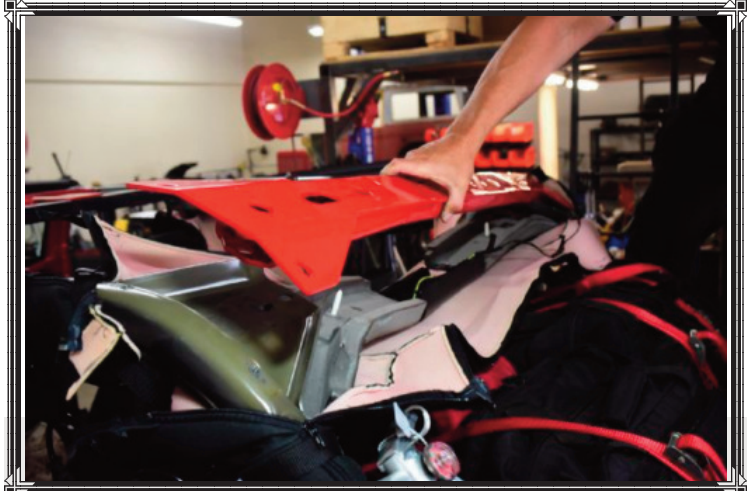
The EVO MFG Center Bar splits the air over the front passenger area and is bolted to the EVO upper cross bar and the factory B-pillar bar; some drilling of the factory B-pillar cross bar is required.



But here's the twist, if you get the EVO MFG Chromoly B-Pillar Cross Bar (P/N EVO-1167) along with the basic Sport Cage kit (as we did), the EVO MFG B-Pillar Cross Bar lays on top of the factory B-pillar cross bar and adds another notch of security and strength. The EVO MFG B-pillar cross bar is attached using the EVO MFG B-Pillar Plates (they double-up the factory B-pillar plates), and the EVO center bar is attached to the EVO B-pillar cross bar in this case—rather than the factory cross bar.



Installation of the EVO MFG Chromoly Sport Cage Kit also requires some trimming of the front of the plastic cover to the factory sound bar. Marks for trimming can be best made by temporarily bolting the sound bar back on to the B-pillar cross bar, then removed again for trimming before final reinstallation.



We also ordered the EVO MFG Chromoly C-Pillar Cross Bar (P/N EVO-1168) and EVO Chromoly MFG Sport Cage Rear Bar (P/N EVO-1157). Installation of the EVO MFG C-pillar cross bar requires removal of the factory C-pillar cross bar. That begins with the removal of all the fabric and padding from the factory C-pillar cross bar. The wiring harness must also be loosened from the factory C-pillar cross bar.



The last piece in our Jeep Wrangler JK sport cage upgrade was bolting the EVO MFG Chromoly Sport Cage Rear Bar to the EVO B-pillar cross bar and C-pillar cross bar. It mimics the EVO front center bar by splitting the area above the Jeep's rear bench seat in two. Some interior fascia trimming is required to install the EVO sport cage rear bar.



Once all the pieces of the EVO MFG Chromoly Sport Cage kit and the optional EVO Chromoly B-Pillar Cross Bar, EVO Chromoly C-Pillar Cross Bar, and EVO Chromoly Sport Cage Rear Bar were in place and all the hardware was torqued down, the previously removed wiring, padding, and zipped covers could all be reassembled and buttoned up to finish the installation.

Sources

Duval Offroad Designs
805-375-7551
dodoffroad.net

EVO Manufacturing
714-879-8913
evomfg.com

California Coating
818-800-0286
californiacoating.com