

I recently installed a metal rear seat divider “splash shield” in my 69 XR7. There are many reasons to do this, some of the more commonly published ones are:

- Safety – Studies have shown that during a rear end collision the fuel tank in the trunks can be ruptured and fling gas into the passenger compartment.
- Noise reduction.
- NHRA requires either a metal diver plate or a fuel cell to replace the stock gas tank.
- Added structural strength.

In any event, I decided that I wanted to put one in my car while it was apart. As it turns out this is not that big a job, even for the novice.

Tools required:

- Metal shears or metal saw to cut arcs. (I used a Craftsman Jigsaw with metal cutting blade.)
- Drill with 1/8” bit
- Phillips screw driver

There was an article in TCCN a while back that showed how to make one of these from scratch using scrap metal (I believe that they recommended an old hood) but if you are as fabrication challenged as I am, this can be a daunting task. So I started looking around for a pre fabricated one. Many places had the original style pressboard dividers, always for Mustangs, but none for Cougars.

I finally located the metal shield I wanted at American Pony (<http://www.americanpony.com>). American Pony lists them for 66-70 Mustangs, but I figured what the heck – It might should work! I ordered the one for a 69-70 Mustang coupe. The price was \$69.90 + shipping (about \$8.00 UPS Ground). Here’s a picture of the 69/70-coupe divider from their website:



- As a side note here, the panel is made in Canada and American pony has stores in both the USA and Canada. Select the appropriate locale when you go to their website. They also ship internationally for those of you who are interested in buying from them.

Here's a link to the seat divider:

http://www.americanpony.com/store/store.mv?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=SF&Product_Code=802007-09-198-199

The divider arrived in about 4 days and at first glance looked like it should work. The kit consists of the 18 gauge metal divider, a tube of silicon sealer for noise reduction and 24 sheet metal screws. The directions are straightforward and correct.

The interior of my car is currently stripped, so I do not know if you have to remove your quarter trim panels or not, but you do have to remove the back seat. The installation is done from the passenger compartment.

The wheel well openings in the panel are the right arc, but too low. I made a pattern of the existing wheel well arc and redrew it about 1" above the original arc.



I used a Craftsman jigsaw with 1/8" - 3/16" sheet metal bit and had no problem cutting the metal divider. The notches for the seat back clips lined up beautifully, but I had to cut 2 additional notches for the package tray clips. This may not be necessary since you can drill the panel to mount these clips but I wanted them in the original location. And I did not want to have to remove them to remove the divider (necessary to change rear shocks). I also raised the notch in the bottom about 1/4", but you may not have to.

After trimming the panel to fit I held it in place and drilled a pilot hole at the top center with my 1/8" drill. Then I applied the RTV supplied with the kit to the top of the rear seat support and to the cross members. I had more than enough RTV to lay a good thick bead. This is not so much to seal the panel as it is to help stop vibration. I put it everywhere that the panel would touch the chassis.

Then I put the panel in place, attached it with one of the supplied screws through the pilot hole and started drilling and screwing the panel on. The instructions note that you can use pop rivets instead of the screws and I suppose you could even weld it on if you were so inclined, but unless you cut holes in the panel you will have difficulty changing those rear shocks! I put screws all along the top and on the cross members and the bottom.

Either the Cougar is about 2" wider than the Mustang or the divider is just made 2" narrower than the car, but this did not concern me. You can fill these with scrap metal pieces or leave them as they are.



Red lines are where I notched for the package tray clips.

Yellow are the trimmed arcs over the wheel wells.

Blue lines point to the gap at the bottom of the panel.

Here's how it looked when done:



And the view from the trunk:



All in all it took about 2 hours start to finish and cost less than \$80.00 to do. I was very satisfied with the product and would recommend this to anyone that wants to make this modification.

Quick overview:

1. Bought steel rear seat divider from <http://www.americanpony.com> for about \$80.
2. Trimmed for higher wheel wells
3. Notched for Package tray clips.
4. Drilled pilot hole.
5. Applied RTV.
6. Drilled holes, screwed panel into place.
7. Project took about 2 hours from start to finish.