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By Gary Mace

Mace of Tennessee Chapter F, Lakeway.

Recently my 2015 GL1800 started automatically locking itself for no apparent reason. I have always used the key fob to lock and unlock my Gold Wing and in the past six years and 105,000 miles, it had never done this before. As I started inquiring about this, I was told by many fellow Wingers that this was normal and was by design. I found out that it is true. Honda has a builtin, auto-lock feature. As designed, if you unlock your GL1800 with the key fob but do not open a trunk or saddlebag within 30 seconds, it will lock automatically, in case the unlock was inadvertent.

However, that is not what I was experiencing. On my bike, even if I opened the trunk or saddlebag within 30 seconds, the auto lock would still engage. The only way to prevent this was to lock and unlock the bike manually at the trunk with the key. After some research I learned a possible cause was a broken wire in the right-side wire harness to the trunk lid. I also learned this is a common issue and thought maybe this information and simple fix could be useful to others.

So, to investigate, I started by gently bending open the three metal harness clamps that hold the harness in place. I then removed all the electrical tape that covered the harness. This exposed a plastic sleeve that covers the wires. I very carefully cut a slit laterally along that sleeve so that it could be removed.

Sure enough, after exposing the wires, I found three wires that had broken in the same place. Clearly this wiring harness bending with each open and close of the trunk was causing wires in the harness to be stressed. I may later explore a better route for this harness to avoid future breaks, but for now, I simply repaired the wires.

Repairing the wires

First, strip about 3/8" of the plastic sheathing from each end of the broken wire using a wire stripper. This can also be done with a sharp knife, but take great care not to cut the actual wires. Next, slide a shrink-wrap solder sleeve over the longest wire. Make an inline splice with the two bare wires.

Now slide the shrink-wrap solder sleeve over your inline splice so that the ring of solder is over the center of the inline splice. Using a safe heat source, heat the shrink-wrap solder sleeve until the solder melts over the wires and the shrink-wrap seals the wire. I find a mini butane torch works best for this task, but it can be done simply with a lighter or a heat gun.

After all damaged wires have been repaired, retape the wiring harness taking care to replace all sleeves and grommets and then re-clamp the wiring harness back into place.

Mace is a retired air traffic controller living in eastern Tennessee. He and his wife have ridden together in 12 countries, 48 states and seven Canadian provinces.

Inline splices

I have had to work on many projects with sloppy pigtail splices made by other people. Pigtail splices are difficult to solder properly or cover with shrinkwrap. It makes for a sloppy job. Pigtail splices are also difficult to work with when there is little slack on broken wires. Inline splices are far superior. To make an inline splice, first make a 90-degree bend in each wire. Interlock the bends together. Then wrap each leg around the wire it is resting against. The result is a neat, strong splice that can easily be soldered and covered with shrink wrap or electrical tape.

Tip: solder sleeves

Shrink-wrap solder sleeves are fabulous for wire repair work. The solder and shrink-wrap are packaged together. Simply slide one over your wires, heat it, and the solder melts over the wires while the shrink-wrap seals the wire at the same time. They can be found in many sizes. I carry a few in my bike's toolkit for quick roadside repairs.



A finished inline splice.







Shrink-wrap solder sleeves.









