

Wheels: Matt of Eaton has two Ford Mustangs (1987 and 1993) and both have had headlight switch failure. Is there a recall on these switches? Any help would be appreciated.

Halderman: I checked for technical service bulletins (TSBs) and recalls of headlight switches at www.alldata.com and did not locate any that included the Ford Mustang. There are however some headlight switch recalls involving other Ford products. I also checked the archives at the www.iatn.net (international automotive technicians network) and located one case where the technician replaced the wire between the headlight switch (red with a yellow tracer) to the dimmer switch with a larger gauge wire. The service technician reported that this repair seems to correct repeated headlight switch replacement problems. The technician also replaced the headlight switch connector that could also have contributed to the fault. The use of high-output replacement halogen bulbs can also increase the current flow through the switch, which can cause the switch to fail.

Wheels: Are there any other things that could cause the headlight switch to fail besides the use of higher amperage headlight bulbs?

Halderman: Some vehicle owners attach accessories such as auxiliary lighting (fog lights), under-vehicle lighting (neons) and other items that are electrically connected to one or more of the interior or exterior lights. All of the current to operate these accessories must flow through the headlight switch. A relay should be used when connecting any additional electrical accessory to a vehicle. A relay contains a small coil that draws only about 0.1 ampere to operate another circuit up to 20 amperes or more depending on the relay. The extra current is drawn from a separate circuit connected to the battery and does not flow through the switch. Adding a relay is not for the do-it-yourselfer. Consult a professional service technician.

