

Slide Motor Replacement Procedure

2006 Fleetwood Discovery, Model 39S

Problem Description

During setup after arrival at a new campground, I discovered that my driver-side slide would not extend more than an inch or so. I was able to retract it, but the same thing happened when I tried to run it out again, both times followed by a “clacking” sound similar to a ratchet slipping. I felt certain the slide motor was dead, because the same thing happened to the passenger-side slide two years earlier and the solution was to replace the motor. Calling it a motor is somewhat misleading, however, because it’s really a motor/gear box assembly. The motor may have actually been okay since it “started” running out the slide, but the gear box was totally shot as you can see from the crack in the gear box shown in this picture. Unfortunately, they are sold as a unit and cannot be purchased separately (as far as I know).



After researching on the DOAI Yahoo group, I felt like this was a project I could handle, especially since we were planning to stay at this campground for the next month and had plenty of time. So, I ordered the motor from Fleetwood for the tidy sum of \$686, including second-day delivery (*like I said, I had plenty of time, but my wife really missed the extra space*). Now \$686 sounds like a lot of money, and it is, but compared to \$1144 paid to a shop for repairing the other one ... not so bad.

Manually Extending the Slide

The slide has to be extended manually in order to have enough working room to replace the motor. Fortunately, Power Gear provides a pretty simple way of doing this. The motor is mounted to the chassis near the center of the slide. Long square drive rods extend from either end of the motor to the rails that carry the slide out. The far right end of the drive rod is hex-shaped, just like a hex nut. Turning hex-shaped end of the rod with a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wrench will extend (or retract) the slide. Turn counter-clockwise to extend.



Before starting, Power Gear instructs you to locate the two-pin connector on the slide motor and disconnect it. Then, rotate the lever on the backside of the motor counter-clockwise about $\frac{1}{8}$ th turn (looking from the rear of the motor). This will release the break that holds the slide in place.

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Now, you're ready to crank out the slide. I was dreading this, but it turned out to be a lot easier than expected. The best tool option is a ¾ inch open-end wrench. I had planned to use a ratchet, but there isn't enough room to slip it over the rod. There also isn't much room to turn the wrench at first, but that changes quickly after a few turns. It took me less than 10 minutes to fully extend the slide. *(The hardest part was getting under the coach)*

Preparing to Remove the Motor

The drive rods must be detached from the motor's drive shaft before it can be removed. This should be a simple process of taking out the retainer pins and collapsing the rods, freeing up access to the motor. Both are identical two-piece telescoping rods, that collapse as you push them away from the motor. Unfortunately, this is where I ran into problems that consumed a lot of time. Rust and corrosion had jammed both rods and two of the retainer pins. It took several hours to successfully break them apart and remove the rust. This probably isn't so unusual on a 10-year old coach, but is perhaps a good item to add to your maintenance routine.

Removing the Motor

Now that the drive rods are out of the way, you can cut the plastic wire-tie that serves as a strain relief for the power cable. Then, remove the four bolts that anchor the motor.

Installing the New Motor

This is the easiest part. Mount the new motor using the same four bolts. Then, re-attach the drive rods to the motor's drive shaft and plug in the two-pin power connector. Lastly, attach a new strain relief wire-tie for the power cord.

Conclusion

Well, that's about all there is to it. After reconnecting everything, I ran the slide in and out several times to make sure it was working okay, and it worked like a charm. The good news is I saved at least \$450 by doing it myself, and maybe more. I say that because the motor for this slide is larger than the other (*more expensive*) and because there may have been extra labor involved due to the corrosion problems. I hope this document comes in handy in case you ever have to deal with the same problem.



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