

Get A Grip.....On Your Air Lines

While some air lines will come with pre-installed or prefabricated handle grips, it's not a requirement, and therefore not always incorporated into the assembly. If not, it's wise to invest in a set of handle grips.

Handle grips allow for a better grip and leverage during coupling and uncoupling of the gladhand connections. During the winter they are extremely useful. Air lines are susceptible to damage when gladhands freeze together. If air lines don't have grips, a driver may place too much force on the air lines themselves when pushing down or pulling up when trying to couple/uncouple the gladhands. This can create kinking, chaffing, rubbing or damage in general to the air lines. Nylon air lines are especially susceptible to this type of damage, and once nylon air lines kink, they must be replaced.

Type of Grips

There are a variety of grips available on the market, ranging from solid metal material, such as aluminum, to softer and more pliable materials, such as rubber. They can be universal in color or come color-coded for better visibility between service and emergency air lines.

Solid Metal "Extension" Handle Grips – When purchased separately these types of grips are installed between the gladhand and air hose fitting for an extended grip. Some nylon air lines come with metal/brass handles built into the lead of the assemblies. Either approach is unyielding and works well for those that prefer a more rigid grip, especially in colder temperatures.



Rubber Handle Grips – Grips made with flexible material, whether pre-installed or purchase separately, will always be fitted around the hose just under the air fitting. Some versions of these grips can be used on both nylon and rubber air assemblies. However, because the rubber grips are soft and pliable, they perform better during tight turns with rubber air hoses. Rubber grips also provide a type of "arch" support for the hose, greatly reducing the likelihood of the hose folding.



Installation Tips

- When installing color-coded grips, be sure to install blue to blue (service) and red to red (emergency).
- Rubber air grips that are not permanently fastened to the air lines can be pushed up and over the air line fitting, as close to the gladhand as possible, to offer a better grip, better leverage, and to keep the grip from sliding down hose.
- Before installing metal grips between the air line and gladhand, be sure thread sealant is applied to both the air fitting and the top of the grip that is installed into the bottom of the gladhand. This prevents air leaks.
- If installing metal grips, this will increase the working length of the air assemblies. Be sure this increase is not enough to cause any issue with the overall working length of the air line, such as deck plate drag or rubbing.
- Use one type of grip maximum. Never double up as this can create a huge leverage point causing damage or possible disconnection.
- Never use black or galvanized pipe as fitting attachments or handles. They will corrode and contaminant the air system.

TIPS

- Handle grips allow for a better grip and leverage during coupling and uncoupling of the gladhand connections, especially during winter when gladhands can freeze and stick together.
- Grips can come pre-installed or purchased separately from air lines. They are available as solid metal "extension" grips installed between the air line and gladhand, or in pliable rubber material that installed on/around the hose.

PRODUCT INFORMATION related to this article is available [here](#).

VISIT US ONLINE at www.phillipsqwiktechtips.com
To be added to our mailing list and for all past issues.