

# Fix Shift Lock Before Car Goes On The Block

**BY TOM AND RAY  
MAGLIOZZI**

**Dear Tom and Ray:**  
I have a 2000 Ford Escort ZX2 with 110,000 miles and an automatic transmission. It starts fine, but I cannot get it out of park unless I stick a screwdriver in the shift lock override slot while turning the key. That's a little bit of a hassle. It also makes the car kind of hard to sell. Since I'm getting ready to sell it, what will it cost me to fix this problem? -- Bev

**TOM:** Well, you could just stick the screwdriver

in there and then hacksaw it off and paint over it, Bev. That's what I'd do.

**RAY:** And that's why my brother has never successfully sold a car to anyone other than a junk man in the past three decades. I'd fix it correctly, Bev. This car still has a fair amount of resale value.

**TOM:** The problem is the shift lock, which prevents you from taking the car out of park unless your foot is on the brake. It's a safety device, designed to keep you from shifting into drive or



Click & Clack

reverse while stepping on the gas and inadvertently speeding over your garbage cans.

**RAY:** Or the neighbor's children.

**TOM:** The shift lock has several components, and the cost will depend on which component is broken. The way it works is that when you step on the brake, a switch energizes a solenoid, which pulls a pin and allows you to shift out of park.

**RAY:** It could be as simple as a bad fuse. If that's all it is, it'll cost you a buck to fix. Or it could be the switch at the brake pedal. That's probably about \$50. Or if it's the solenoid, you could be

looking at a couple hundred bucks.

**TOM:** But the number of potential buyers who will flee when they see you jamming a screwdriver into the console will cost you far more than that, Bev. So I'd get it fixed.

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