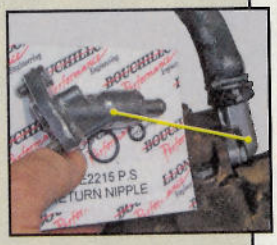
PUMPED UP

Over the span of the muscle era, Ma Mopar used power steering pumps from three separate vendors: Thompson (TRW), Federal (F-M), and Saginaw, which was part of GM but was spun off and is now part of Delphi Automotive. Over the decades, only one has had real staying power, being used on Mopars at late as 2003: The Saginaw. And this is for good reason: It was the quietest, driest (external leakage), smallest, coolest-running of the bunch, and, most importantly, produced the most consistent pressure

Here's the first-gen Saginaw (left) and last (right). Despite visual dissimilarity, they are kissin' cousins. In fact, the 1960s reservoir swaps onto the late ('75-up) pump in seconds, making them visually identical. Starting on 1980 pumps, the outlet (pressure) fitting went metric. However, the threads in the pump casting remained unchanged, so you can swap a US-thread outlet fitting into a 2003 pump. All Saginaws used an externally threaded 5/8˝ shaft with a Woodruff key (arrow) until 1974, after that the shafts were 3/4˝, with an internal thread for the puller/installer tool. The factory never made large-shaft pulleys to use this with muscle-era brackets, but Bouchillon *does*. in fact, they have pulleys for almost every conceivable Saginaw combination. Here's a hot tip that may interest you: Saginaw pumps from slant-six cars had a regulator valve (easily changed, see the FSM) that produced about 300 PSI less line pressure. Result: Low-buck high-effort steering.



To use a Saginaw on an early car with the huge heater-hose-size return hose, you need to swap to 11/32˝ hose and a like-sized return fitting on the chuck. Bouchillon has 'em in several varieties (re: nipple angle).

Ditto the pressure fitting. In most cases, we'd advise spec'ing a pressure hose for your engine and a Sag pump, in a circa-early-'70s car they are readily available. If the pump end doesn't mate to your chuck's fitting, Bouchillon has your back.

One of the reasons for using a Saginaw pump is the ready availability of all installation parts. Hoses (not shown), brackets, pulleys—whatever you need, it's out there. Bouchillon seems to be the one-stop shop. They even carry the hard-to-find thin-pattern pulley-mounting locknut and special pulleys to adapt the later 3/4˝ "smooth" (press-on pulley) shaft pump to early Mopars. Hoffman's Winners Circle makes a super nice bracket kit that also includes 100-point resto-correct mounting hardware (bolts, etc.) and 440 Source has low-cost brackets.

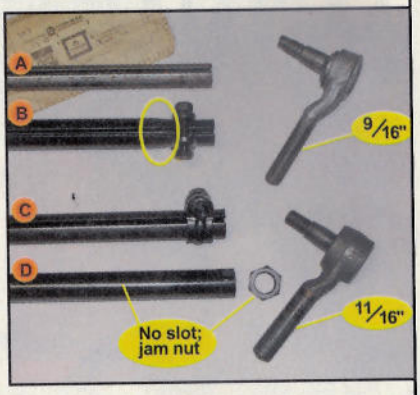
at low RPM, minimizing the dreaded "pump catch," wherein you momentarily lose power assist during low-speed maneuvers such as at an autocross. Therefore, unless you are doing a 100-point restoration, you should be using the Saginaw pump in any build where you've decided that you want power steering.

Introduced on Mopars in 1966 (smallblock B-bodies received them first, for some arcane reason lost to history), and achieving 100% usage by 1977, the Saginaw has undergone several design changes which affect, but do not prohibit, swapability. Check the accompanying pix for more than you need to know.

One small bit of trivia for you bucks-up guys: You can still get a brand new Saginaw pump from your local Chrysler dealer. Ask the man for P/N 52039489AC.

TIE ONE ON

All of our classic Mopars—1962 to 1975 A, B, and E-bodies—used 9/16" tie rod ends with 3/4˝ O.D. adjuster sleeves (A). For heavy-duty use, such as rally or road race, MP has always recommended welding up the gap in the sleeve. Today, however, we have many more elegant options to reduce steering tie rod flex. The lowest-buck route is simply the "bulged" sleeves (B, 7/8˝ O.D) supplied as replacement by



most aftermarket vendors; since these fit the stock 9/16˝ ends, they are drop-in replacements. Next up on the food chain are the '74-up C-body 11/16˝ ends and adjuster sleeves (C), also measuring 7/8˝ O.D.; these bolt into any classic Mopar, they were also a "random factory option" on 1976-'80 F-bodies. All of the above require a slot at least at the outer ends of the sleeves since they use pinch-clamps for adjustment locking. So the final solution is the *solid* sleeves (D) from Firm Feel, Inc. These use jam nuts instead of pinch clamps for locking, eliminating the slot entirely. Drag cars might get away with lightweight aluminum sleeves, but these must never be sure on the street!

SOURCES:

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