

Distributors & Ignition Systems

HITACHI ELECTRONIC IGNITION SYSTEMS – HONDA

Accord
Civic
Prelude

DESCRIPTION

Honda electronic distributors consist of a housing, rotor and distributor cap. A reluctor, stator, magnets, pulse generator and breaker plate assemblies are located inside the distributor. On all Civic models and California Accord and Prelude models with automatic transmissions, the ignitor (control unit) is integral with the pulse generator inside the distributor. See Fig. 1

Other models have an ignitor mounted elsewhere on the vehicle. See Fig. 2. Most models have both centrifugal and vacuum advance/retard mechanisms. California Accord and Prelude models with automatic transmissions have no vacuum advance/retard mechanism.

OPERATION

The reluctor is mounted on the distributor rotor shaft and turns with the distributor shaft. See Figs. 1 and 2. It is secured to the shaft with a roll pin. As the reluctor turns, its 4 external teeth come in line with the 2 stator upright teeth. As the reluctor approaches and passes the stator teeth, variations occur in the magnetic field around them.

This causes the pulse generator, located inside the distributor housing, to signal the ignitor (mounted inside the distributor and integral with pulse generator on Civic models and California Accord and Prelude models with automatic transmission; mounted remote from distributor on other models). See Figs. 3 and 4.

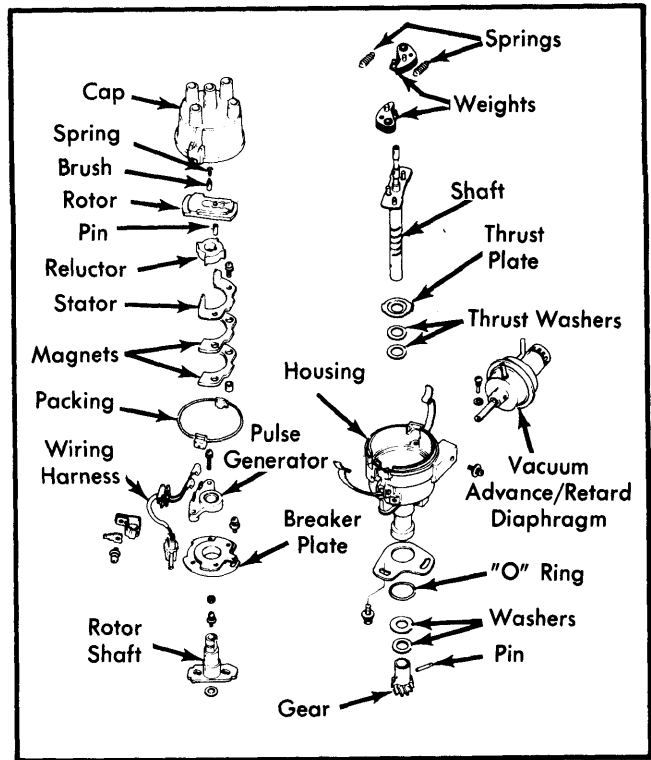


Fig. 2 Disassembled View of Hitachi Distributor (Accord & Prelude – Calif. Man. Trans. & All Federal)

Each time the reluctor teeth come in line and then pass the stator teeth, transistors inside the ignitor are turned off and on. This results in a magnetic field building and collapsing in the

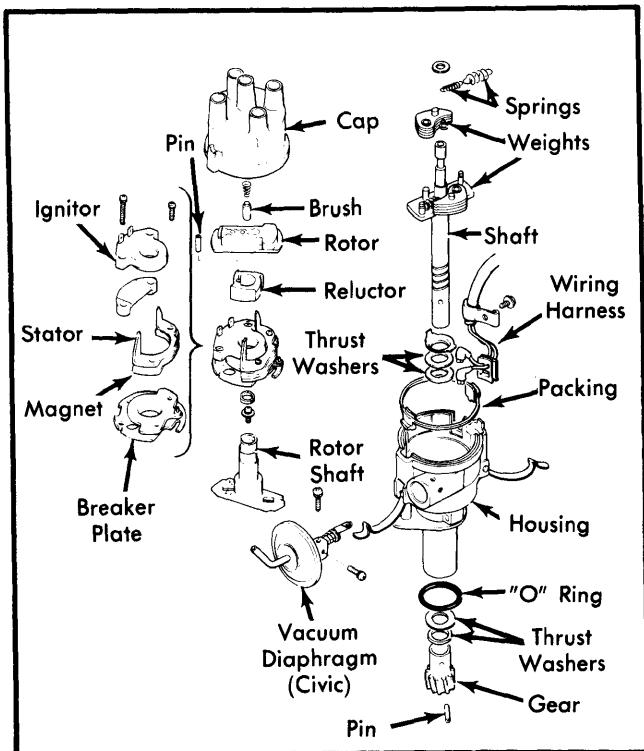


Fig. 1 Disassembled View of Hitachi Distributor (All Honda Civics – Other Calif. Auto. Trans. Similar)

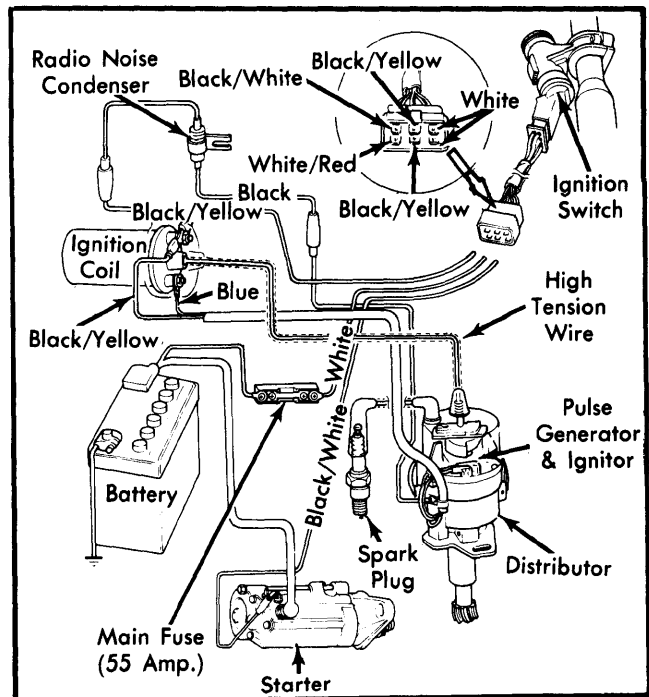


Fig. 3 Schematic of Ignition System (Civic & Calif. Accord & Prelude Auto. Trans.)

HITACHI ELECTRONIC IGNITION SYSTEMS – HONDA (Cont.)

primary circuit of the ignition coil. When this field collapses, a voltage surge occurs in the secondary circuit of the ignition coil.

When this occurs, a high voltage spark is fed from the coil, through the distributor's rotor and cap to the secondary wiring and spark plugs.

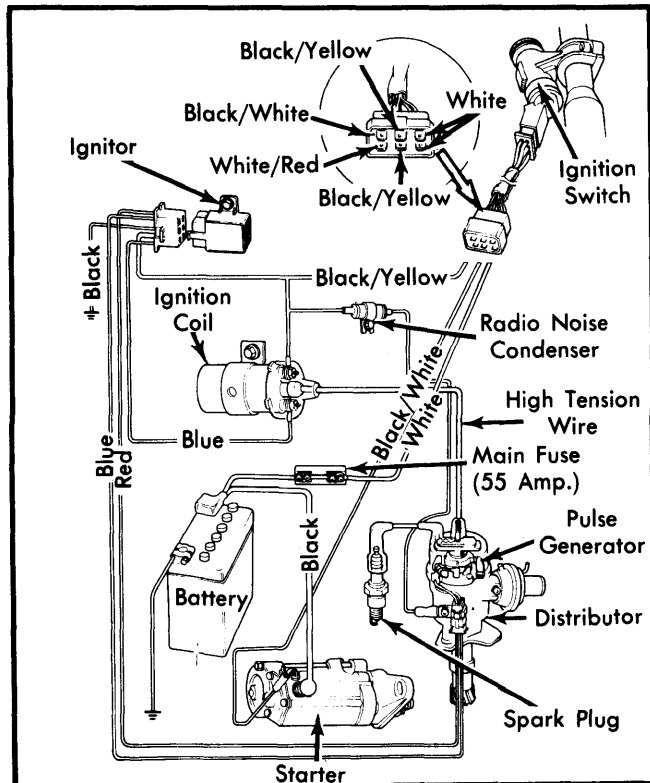


Fig. 4 Schematic of Ignition System
(Accord & Prelude – Calif. Man. Trans. & All Federal)

On models with pulse generator/ignitor assemblies, two wires lead from the ignitor to the ignition coil. On models with only an internal pulse generator (an external ignitor), two wires lead from the pulse generator to the ignitor. The ignitor then is connected with 2 additional wires to the ignition coil. A fifth wire from the ignitor leads to ground.

SPECIFICATIONS

Centrifugal & Vacuum Advance/Retard – See Specifications Pages in this section.

ADJUSTMENT

CAUTION – To avoid damaging the ignition system, never reverse battery polarity. Do not let pulse generator wires touch ignition wires. Do not do anything that would produce abnormal pulses. Always connect pulse type tachometers to negative terminal of ignition coil. Make sure all wires and cables are connected properly.

Cam Angle – Cam angle (dwell) is automatically set and manual adjustment is not required.

Reluctor-To-Stator Air Gap – Align 2 teeth of reluctor with 2 teeth of stator and check air gap. Check air gap at all teeth as

reluctor is rotated. See Fig. 5. There should be equal air gap at all 4 teeth. If necessary to adjust, loosen 2 screws securing stator and reposition stator to provide equal air gaps. Tighten 2 screws.

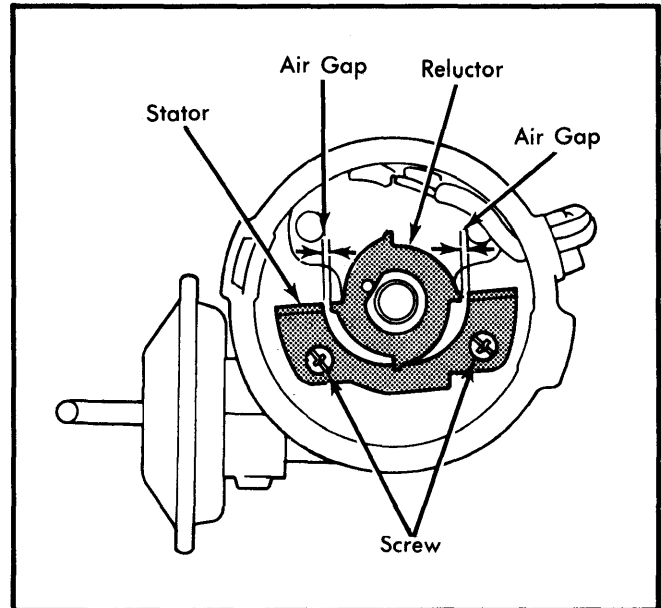


Fig. 5 Adjusting Reluctor-To-Stator Air Gap

Rotor-to-Distributor Cap Terminal – Check occasionally for rough or pitted rotor or cap terminals. Scrape or file off carbon deposits. Smooth rotor terminal with an oil stone or No. 600 sandpaper if roughness exists.

Centrifugal Advance – Disconnect vacuum advance hoses from distributor. Connect timing light and start engine. Increase engine speed. Timing mark (T) should appear to move past pointer toward firewall, indicating an increase in ignition advance. If not, check centrifugal advance mechanism for sticking or binding.

Vacuum Advance – Remove distributor cap. Disconnect vacuum hoses from distributor vacuum advance or advance/retard diaphragm. Connect vacuum pump to diaphragm. Gradually draw a vacuum while watching breaker plate movement. Check for smooth operation without binding. If pump indicates a loss of vacuum, replace diaphragm unit. Turn breaker plate right and left to check for free movement.

TESTING

BASIC SYSTEM TEST

- 1) If engine will not start and starter will not crank engine, check battery, main fuse and electrical wiring. Check starter circuit wiring and ignition switch. If engine will not start, but starter cranks engine, hold coil wire $\frac{1}{4}$ " from coil tower while cranking engine.
- 2) If there is spark from coil, then hold spark plug wire terminal $\frac{1}{4}$ " from spark plug while cranking engine.
- 3) If there is no spark at the plug, check spark plug wire condition, inspect distributor cap and rotor, and as a last resort on

Distributors & Ignition Systems

HITACHI ELECTRONIC IGNITION SYSTEMS – HONDA (Cont.)

Civic models and California Accord and Prelude models with automatic transmission, replace ignitor in distributor. On all models, if spark exists at the plug, check fuel system, spark plugs, ignition timing or valve timing.

4) If there was no spark at the coil in step 1), check voltage between coil primary winding positive terminal and ground with ignition switch in "ON" position. Battery voltage should be found. If not, check wiring from ignition switch to ignition coil.

5) If battery voltage exists, check voltage between coil primary winding negative terminal and ground with ignition switch in "ON" position. Again, battery voltage should exist. If not, check wiring from coil primary negative terminal to igniter. Also check coil primary resistance.

6) If battery voltage was present at negative terminal, check voltage between coil positive and negative terminals with engine cranking. Reading should be 1-3 volts. If within specifications, check primary and secondary coil resistance, as well as spark plug wire resistance.

7) If voltage in step 6) was not 1-3 volts, proceed as follows. On all Civic models and California Accord and Prelude models with automatic transmissions, disconnect lead wires from ignitor in distributor. On all other models, disconnect ignitor connector. See Fig. 6. Check voltage on coil side of connector, first between blue wire and black (ground) wire and then between black/yellow wire and black (ground) wire. Battery voltage should exist with ignition switch "ON".

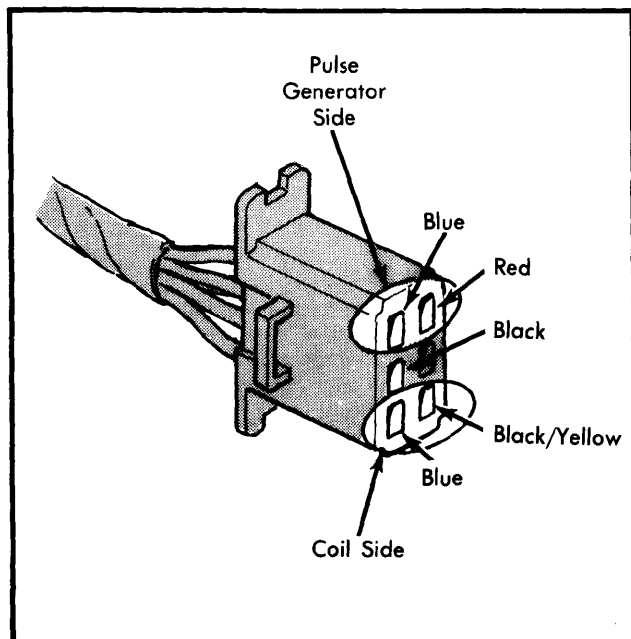


Fig. 6 Checking Voltage at Ignitor Connector

8) If not, check wiring from ignition coil to ignitor. On Civic models and California Accord and Prelude models with automatic transmissions, check continuity between ignitor terminals. See Fig. 7. Set ohmmeter to x100 range. Attach positive lead to black/yellow wire and negative lead to blue wire. There should be no continuity.

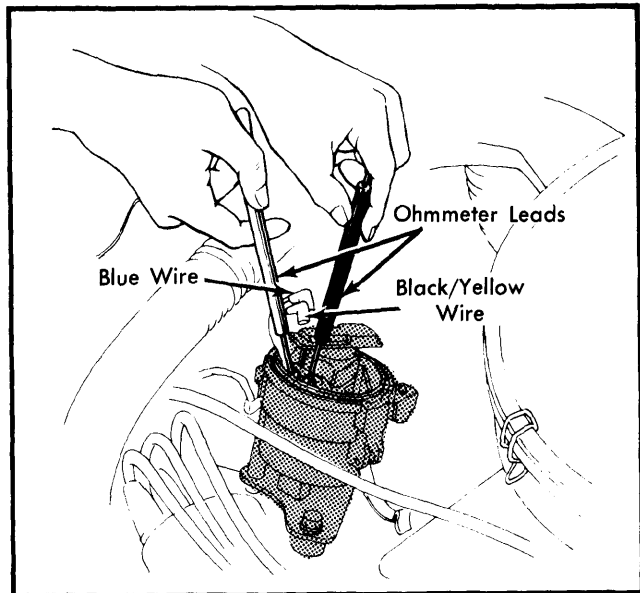


Fig. 7 Checking Continuity at Ignitor Terminals (All Civics & Calif. Accord & Prelude Auto. Trans.)

9) Then, reverse ohmmeter leads (positive lead to blue wire, negative lead to black/yellow wire). There should now be continuity. If incorrect results are obtained, replace ignitor and repeat test.

10) On models other than those listed in step 8), check resistance of pulse generator by connecting ohmmeter leads across blue and pink terminals at distributor connector. See Fig. 8. Resistance should measure 800-1200 ohms. If not, replace pulse generator. If within specifications, but system still does not operate, replace ignitor and repeat test.

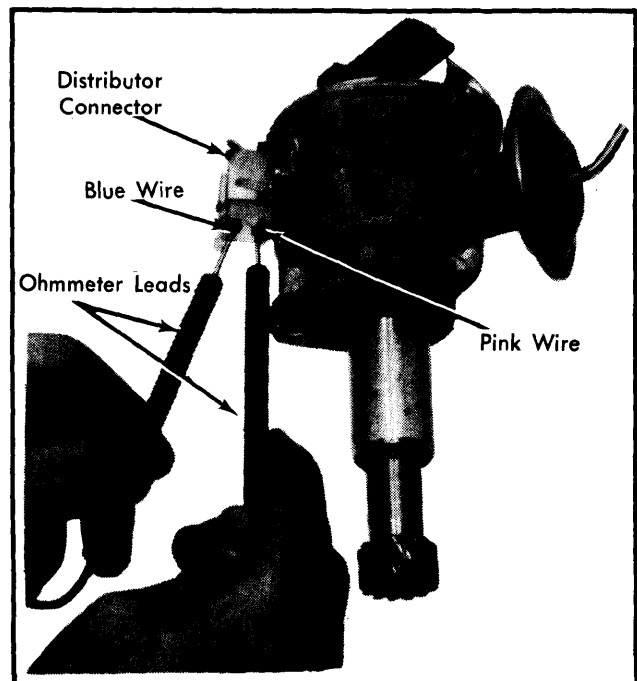


Fig. 8 Checking Pulse Generator Resistance (Models with Externally Mounted Ignitors)

HITACHI ELECTRONIC IGNITION SYSTEMS – HONDA (Cont.)

COMPONENT TESTS

Ignition Coil Primary Resistance – Turn ignition switch "OFF" and remove positive and negative wires from ignition coil terminals. Connect an ohmmeter set in the x1 range with one probe touching each primary terminal. See Fig. 9. On California Accord and Prelude models with automatic transmission, the reading should be 1.06-1.24 ohms. On other Accord and Prelude models, the reading should be 1.78-2.08 ohms, and on Civic models, 1.0-1.3 ohms. If not, replace ignition coil.

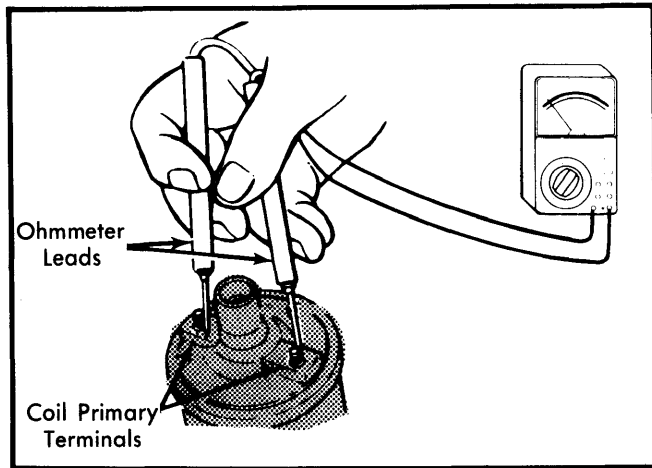


Fig. 9 Checking Ignition Coil Primary Resistance

Ignition Coil Secondary Resistance – Turn ignition switch "OFF". Set ohmmeter in x1000 range. Connect ohmmeter probes to ignition coil negative terminal (wire removed) and coil tower terminal. See Fig. 10. On Civic models and California Accord and Prelude models with automatic transmission, the reading should be 7,400-11,000 ohms. On all other models, resistance should read 8,800-13,200 ohms. If not, replace ignition coil.

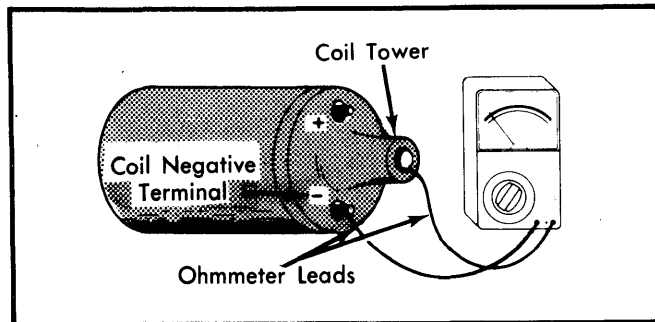


Fig. 10 Checking Ignition Coil Secondary Resistance

Condenser Capacity – Using a condenser tester, check for 0.38-0.56 microfarads.

Pulse Generator Resistance – Disconnect connector from distributor. Connect ohmmeter probes (set to x100 range) across blue and pink wire terminals on distributor side of connector. Resistance should be 800-1200 ohms. If not, replace pulse generator. If resistance is correct, but system still will not operate, replace ignitor and recheck system operation.

Ignition Wire Resistance – Carefully remove wires by pulling on their rubber boots. Do not bend wire or conductor may

be broken. Check for corroded condition, cleaning if necessary. Connect ohmmeter probes (set in x1000 scale) to each end of ignition wires. Resistance reading should be less than 25,000 ohms. If not, replace wires.

OVERHAUL

Disassembly – 1) Remove spark plug wires and vacuum hoses from distributor. Remove distributor cap. Remove condenser ground wire and disconnect pulse generator connector or lead wires from ignitor in distributor. Remove hold-down bolt, lifting distributor from cylinder head.

2) Carefully pry upward on reluctor with 2 screwdrivers, cushioned with rags to prevent damage to distributor housing. See Fig. 11. Use care not to damage reluctor or stator. When installing reluctor, drive roll pin in place with its gap away from distributor shaft.

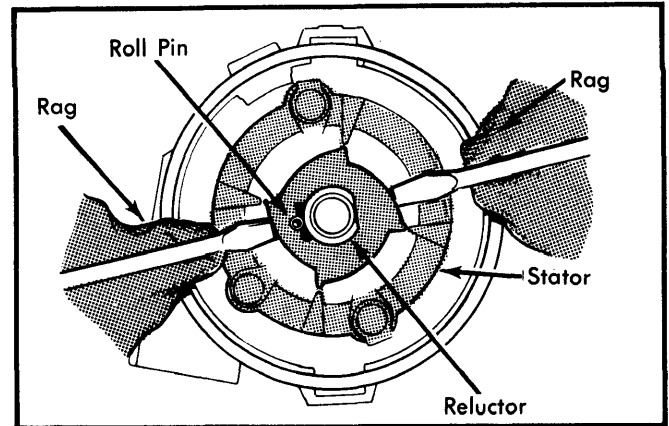


Fig. 11 Removing Reluctor From Shaft

3) On California Accord and Prelude models with manual transmission, remove advance/retard diaphragm mount screw. Pull out on diaphragm unit, while pushing down on arm. California models with automatic transmission have no vacuum advance mechanism.

4) On other models, including the Civic, remove advance diaphragm mount screws. Pull diaphragm arm out of housing, while lifting up on end of arm.

5) On all models, drive roll pin from distributor shaft. Remove shaft and gear from housing. Inspect and replace parts as necessary.

Installation – 1) Install centrifugal advance weights and springs. Install thrust plate and 2 washers on shaft. Grease shaft and install in housing. Put 2 washers and gear on lower end of shaft. Line up holes in gear shoulder with hole in shaft. Drive in new roll pin.

2) Rotate gear until mark on gear shoulder lines up with mark on housing. Hold gear in line with mark and install rotor shaft on top of main shaft. Flat surface should face vacuum advance side of housing.

3) Be sure holes in rotor shaft arms fit over pins in centrifugal advance weights. Install screw with lock washer in top of shaft.

4) Align breaker plate in distributor housing. See Fig. 12. Check that upper plate moves freely (California Accord and

Distributors & Ignition Systems

HITACHI ELECTRONIC IGNITION SYSTEMS – HONDA (Cont.)

Prelude models with automatic transmission have no upper plate). Be sure diaphragm arm attachment hole (California Accord & Prelude models with manual transmissions) or pin (other models) does not rotate past end of slot in lower plate.

5) If such condition exists, adjust range of free travel by forcibly rotating plate past its limit in opposite direction. Recheck hole and pin positions.

6) Check reluctor-to-stator air gap and rotor-to-terminal surfaces. Install diaphragm assembly. Crank engine until No. 1 piston is at TDC. Install new "O" ring on distributor housing. Line up mark on distributor gear shoulder with mark on housing. Insert distributor straight into final position. Rotor will turn itself to No. 1 firing position.

7) Install hold-down bolt and tighten temporarily. Set ignition timing and tighten hold-down bolt securely. Install distributor cap, aligning mark on cap (near clamp lug) with rotor.

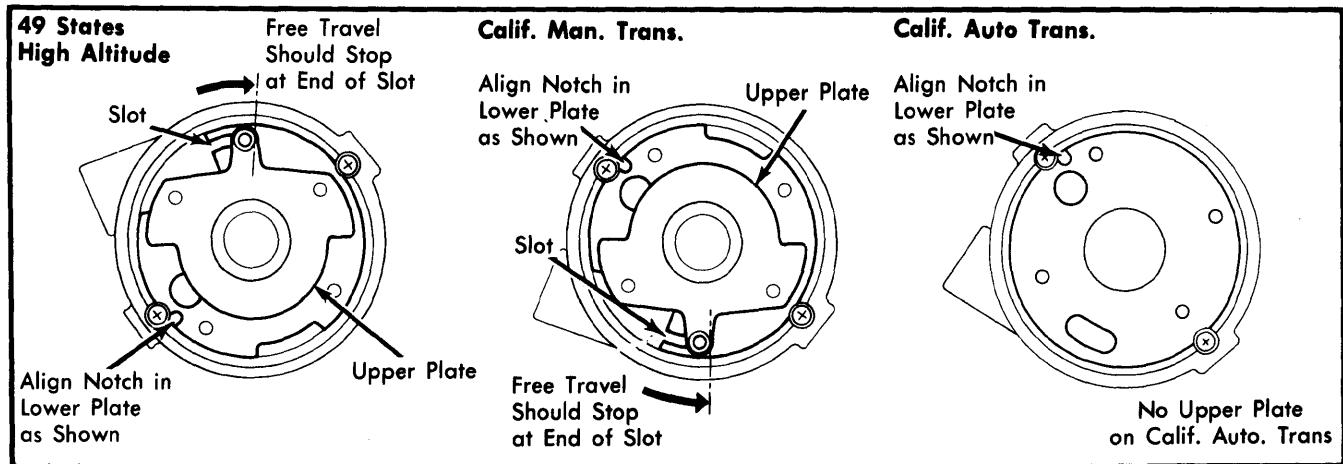


Fig. 12 Installing Breaker Plate on Accord & Prelude Models
(Civic Models Same as Center Illustration)