

Fixing a stuck transmission shift lever on a Ferguson or early MF tractor

Transmission main shaft lever hang-up is common on most models of Ferguson/MF tractors after they get a little wear on them. The shift lever is held down by a spring. When you start to shift you will unconsciously lift up on the lever. This causes the shift lever to go into the shift fork on the other shift rail. That rail cannot be moved because of the lock on the back of the transmission that prevents it from going into two gears at the same time. Once you have both shift rails in the neutral position you can then move the shift lever.

If necessary, move the tractor to a level spot and turn off the engine. If you have a high-low transmission, put the high-low shifter in neutral to relieve any pressure that might be on the gears.

Remove the transmission filler plug. Using a light, look inside and you will see a large gear. Depress the clutch.

If the transmission is stuck in reverse, take a long screwdriver or a small pry bar and pry the large gear forward. Pry it backward if it is stuck in first gear.

If it is stuck in second or third gear you can see the shifting fork for them through the filler hole. Pry the fork forward if hung in second and backward if stuck in third. If you happen to go too far it will go in the other gear. You need to get it in the center.

You should be able to feel the detent balls pop in the grooves in the shift rail as you move the gear or fork. Through the years I have probably unstuck at least a thousand of them this way.

To avoid this condition when changing gears, use the open palm of your hand to push the lever into neutral. Then grasp the lever to put it in the gear you want.

- Big Dean Austin