

Steering Wheel and Column Description and Operation

The steering wheel and column has 4 primary functions:

- Vehicle steering
- Vehicle security
- Driver convenience
- Driver safety

Vehicle Steering

The steering wheel is the first link between the driver and the vehicle. The steering wheel is fastened to a steering shaft within the column. At the lower end of the column, the intermediate shaft connects the column to the steering gear.

Vehicle Security, Found on Some Vehicle Models

Theft deterrent components are mounted and designed into the steering column. The following components allow the column to be locked in order to minimize theft:

- The ignition switch--location varies
- The steering column lock--content varies
- The ignition cylinder--location varies
- The theft deterrent module--location varies

Driver Convenience

The steering wheel and column may also have driver controls attached for convenience and comfort. The following controls may be mounted on or near the steering wheel or column.

- The turn signal switch
- The hazard switch
- The headlamp dimmer switch
- The wiper/washer switch
- The horn pad/cruise control switch
- The redundant radio/entertainment system controls
- The manual/power tilt or tilt/telescoping functions
- The power pedal adjustment control switch
- The navigation
- The HVAC controls

Driver Safety

The steering wheel and column has safety features to protect the driver. The following components may be mounted on or near the steering column:

Energy-Absorbing Steering Column: The energy-absorbing steering column compresses in the event of a front-end collision, which reduces the chance of injury to the driver. The energy-absorbing feature, collapsible steering shaft, and break away mounting features help reduce the injury in the event of an accident. In addition to these features, the following driver safety features may be on the steering column:

Electronic Park Lock (EPL)/Ignition Lock Cylinder Control Actuator: If the vehicle is equipped with automatic transmission and a floor mounted console gear shift, it has an ignition lock cylinder control actuator system in the steering column. The ignition lock cylinder control actuator purpose is to prevent the ignition key from being turned to the OFF position when the transmission is in any position other than PARK and the vehicle may still be moving. The column ignition lock system consists of an ignition lock cylinder control actuator, and a park position switch that is located in the automatic transmission shift lock control switch. The ignition lock cylinder control actuator contains a pin that is spring loaded to mechanically prevent the ignition key cylinder from being turned to the lock position when the vehicle transmission is not in the PARK position. If vehicle power is lost, and/or the transmission is not in the PARK position the operator will not be able to turn the ignition key to the lock position and will not be able to remove the ignition key from the column.

SIR Coil and Module: For additional information on the operation of the SIR coil and module, refer to [SIR System Description and Operation](#).

Steering Wheel Angle Sensor or Steering Wheel Position Sensor: The steering wheel position sensor is located somewhere along the steering shaft assembly. The sensor measures the position of the steering wheel and the speed at which it is rotated. A signal representing this measurement is provided to the vehicle stability enhancement system (VSES) module. The VSES module uses this signal, along with several others representing different vehicle conditions, to monitor the driving behavior of the vehicle and ensure that it stays in control. If the VSES module determines that the vehicle is out of control it provides signals to the powertrain control module (PCM) and the ABS module. These output signals are used to modulate the transmission torque and brake pressure of each of the vehicles wheels in order to regain control of the vehicle.