

Renewing coolant hoses on a 'B' series engined MGB based NG:

One of the planned winter jobs on Cracker for 2025/26 was to overhaul the cooling system. As you cannot buy a coolant hose kit for this vehicle setup you will have to mix and match. The first thing to decide is do you want silicone or rubber hoses. The main advantage with silicone is an increased lifespan and four times the life of rubber is often quoted. They come in a variety of colours but the obscure colours do not offer such a good range of shapes and sizes. The Blue coloured hoses appear to offer the best selection and can often be found to a higher specification than the other colours. The main disadvantage with silicon hoses is that they are slightly porous and you do need to check the coolant level on a regular basis.

As for rubber hoses it is interesting that (as far as I am aware) no car manufacturer fits silicone hoses as standard, they all fit rubber. If you buy good quality rubber hoses, such as 'Gates' products they last several years and are much cheaper than silicone. A couple of days after removing Cracker's hoses I took our Toyota RAV4 in for its Annual Service and had a chat with the top service guy who stated that Toyota expect their cars to last the 100k miles or ten years warranty without any problems with the coolant hoses, praise indeed for good quality rubber hose. However please remember that aftermarket items are often to a lower standard than OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) even though the seller may claim otherwise. Another worthwhile point is that often a LandCrab bottom hose is often a direct fit, or can be modified to fit by making the vertical section of hose shorter or longer by use of a beaded hose connector; however the bottom hoses are often NOS (New Old Stock). As the LandCrab went out of production in 1981 you can easily judge how long these NOS hoses have been sitting on the shelf.

So to summarise; my advice, for long term reliability is to avoid NOS hoses and assemble your own from new proprietary parts. I'm going with silicone for the longer lifespan, hence reduced maintenance time and effort. The fact that they are slightly porous doesn't worry me as I do a pre-use check every time I use Cracker.

To replace the coolant hoses on your car (and update your cooling system) you need the following parts.

1. A new thermostat, I use an 82 degrees C (the efficiency of the heater is related to the efficiency of the thermostat).
2. A thermostat gasket, try to avoid the cork ones.
3. A new radiator cap, I use a 15psi one.
4. Antifreeze recommended for older cars, I use Bluecol.
5. Stainless steel Jubilee clips to suit the hose OD (Outside Diameter).
6. Heater hoses, the connections on a standard MGB heater and water tap take 1/2" ID (Internal Diameter) hose.
7. A top hose with 1-1/8" ID (28mm) made from a 90 degree elbow with 1-1/8" ID at both ends and 6" legs. (I find that the use of this results in a barely discernible kink which doesn't affect coolant flow).

A bottom hose which can be fabricated using the following parts; note that the outlet from the water pump is 1-1/8" ID (28mm) and the bottom radiator outlet on a LandCrab radiator is 1-1/4" ID (32mm)

8. A cast elbow, part number ACH5031, as originally fitted to MGA's and early MGB's. This is 1-1/8" on one end and 1-1/4" on the other end.
9. A 3" (75mm) length of 1-1/8" ID hose to go between the 1-1/8" inlet on the water pump and the cast iron; elbow. On Cracker this was the piece cut off item 7. when adjusting the leg length.
10. Two 90 degree elbow hoses with both ends 1-1/4" ID and 4" legs. One elbow goes on the bottom radiator outlet. The leg is cut off the second one (it's the cheapest way to source a short length of 1-1/4" hose) and fixed to the cast iron elbow.
11. A 1-1/4" hose jointing sleeve (beaded joiner) available from Car Builder Solutions, for joining the pipes from the elbow and radiator after you have cut them to a suitable shape and size.

