

Checking the transmission fluid in a TH400 in a Jaguar XJS

There is much discussion about this relatively simple procedure. Some care is needed due to the location of the dipstick.

The car should be on a flat, level surface, but as always near enough is OK, and a good dose of common sense applies.

The dipstick has a “Cold” and “Hot” measure.

The Cold measure is generally used for the Initial fill after fluid drain. It is a “guide only”, and must not be used as a definite fluid level for the transmission.

The Hot side is the correct side to use here.

Once refilled using the Cold side, run the engine, apply the brakes, move the gear selector to R then to D, then return to P. Leave the engine running, and pull the dipstick, and note the reading on the Cold side. Add a small amount of fluid as needed, but do NOT overfill the transmission.

Run the engine for 15 minutes, then remove the dipstick, wipe the end on a clean rag, re-insert, and pull out, and note the reading on the Hot side of the dipstick.

As long as the fluid level is Above the full on the Cold side, and Below the Full on the Hot side, all is OK.

I now suggest driving the car for about 15 miles or so, with the engine at idle, repeat the dipstick check and note the fluid level on the HOT side only. If it's a little “overfull” do not panic, it is NOT a required science that it is “spot on”. If it requires a small amount of fluid, top it off carefully.

Most of mine ran a tad overfull all their lives.

The TH400 transmission is not a fussy unit, and very forgiving.

The caution about access to the dipstick.

The dipstick is located at the rear of the engine bay, on the RH side, and is barely visible under all the wires and hoses in that area.

When removing that dipstick, take extreme caution with the wires and hoses, as they are easily dislodged.

That dipstick is usually VERY tight in the tube, so a decent “grab” on the RED T Handle is normally needed, and that's when the damage to the wires etc takes place.

Fluid usage.

There is also a lot of banter about what fluid to use in this transmission. I have used Full Synthetic Trans Fluid in all my TH400 transmissions, and there have been no issues at all.

A couple of snaps showing the dipstick on my RHD car.



The RED top of the transmission dipstick is visible at the top RH section of the picture, right in front of the brake fluid reservoir.



Here the RED of the dipstick top is barely visible under the 2 hoses just above the brake fluid reservoir rubber cover.

My engine bay has been CLEANED OUT greatly, so the RED is able to be seen. On a standard car, not so easy.