

# CAREFREE OF COLORADO SLIDE OUT AWNING REPLACEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

By Tyler Hammack

## CAREFREE OF COLORADO "CHEAT SHEET FABRIC INSTALLATION

I've developed this Carefree of Colorado "cheat sheet" because of their many different models of awnings and Carefree's obsession of not visibly labeling them making it difficult to work on their awnings. (Gee! Could this be deliberate???) Anyway this will make the job much easier, less frustrating, and much quicker. Which method you decide to use is up to you...I use both depending on my customer's wishes but I'm leaving it up to you.

There are 2 main issues in changing out the fabric on Carefree awnings.

- #1. Pinning the tube (so that you don't lose the spring tension)
- #2. Removing the fabric from the tube

On some of their models their instructions indicate you can pin the roller tube. However, finding the hole in the main shaft can be difficult to impossible. This means you normally end up removing the awning hardware on one end of the awning (usually the left end...but this can vary depending on the model and length of awning) and manually allowing the spring to unwind. This is not "fun", it can be dangerous, and suffice it to say I don't like to do it this way.

Now on to the 2nd issue, removing the fabric from the tube. Here again depending on which model of Carefree we're talking about you have to remove the endcap to remove the fabric because it is not slotted at the channel on the roller tube where the fabric fits into the roller tube. This means drilling out rivets and re-riveting it upon installation. Comparing this installation to A&E's makes your head spin.

This is how you can get around both issues all at once.

- #1. Remove cover if so equipped.
- #2. Unroll fabric off of roller tube, bring channel where fabric is attached to the tube to approx. 12 to 1 o'clock.
- #3. Pin the tube.  
A tool I have found that works great for this is a large jaw oil filter wrench. Harbor Freight carries a Pittsburgh tool... Locking Oil Filter Wrench #66568....it looks like a vice grip with large

Curved grips on it and it works great.

Customers of ours have come up with different variations of this but you get the idea...you want to lock the roller tube in position so it won't move.

- #4. Once this is done I drill out the channel (1/4" bit) about an inch from the End cap and about an inch long. (You don't want to be too close to the endcap). Because you need room to work to remove the old fabric and install the new fabric. Also you don't want to go crazy here with drilling because the channel does hold the fabric in place. File off any rough edges because we don't want to tear the new fabric upon installation.
- #5. Now there may or may not be part of the plastic spline (which is holding the fabric in the channel) sticking out of the end of the old fabric. Either way use a small awl to get under the end of the fabric in the channel, tug on the fabric to break it loose, and guide it out of the channel. Usually the fabric will come out quite easily.
- #6. Make sure the slot you have opened up in the channel is free of burr's and rough edges before you install the new fabric. Open up the end of channel on the RV (large screwdriver works well for this) and file down any rough edges. If the channel on the RV is dirty, clean it out. This will make installation much easier. Then spray both channels with silicon.
- #7. It's best to have 2 people for the installation of the new fabric. One person will be feeding in the fabric in both channels (while working under the fabric.) **DON'T RUSH THIS PROCESS.** The person feeding the fabric into the channels should feed the new awning into the channels as far as he can until it begins to push too hard. Then have the 2nd person (either on the slide room or on a ladder next to the room) pull on the fabric to help the person feeding the fabric. The person feeding the fabric is in charge here getting the fabric in place for the 2nd person to pull either at the roller tube or the channel on the RV. Go 6" - 7" at a time back and forth so that you won't tear the new fabric.
- #8. Once installed visually line up the ends of fabric at the tube to the fabric in the channel on the RV. Also pull the loose fabric out over the roller tube and pull it down to tighten it and observe how it is "tracking" over the fabric on the tube. If it is "off" adjust the fabric at the RV to make it line up better. Now you're ready to remove the device you're using to pin the tube. With one person at each end of the roller tube remove the device and allow the tube to slowly wrap up the fabric. Now run the room in and out to check how the fabric is tracking. Once you're satisfied with this install a screw at both ends of the awning in the track on the RV so it won't move.