

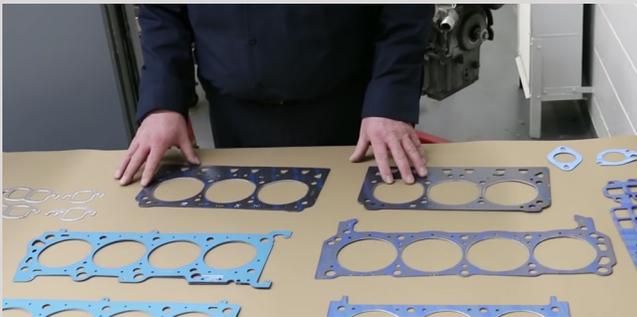
Which Direction Should You Install A Fel-Pro® Gasket?

STARTING THE REPAIR RIGHT

Installing gaskets in the correct direction is critical. In this article, Fel-Pro will help you determine **'which side is up'** to correctly install various gaskets types.

Some gaskets are asymmetric, and the correct orientation can be visually distinguished. However, others can be installed with either side facing up and the gasket will seal either way. Sometimes gaskets for the same engine might appear very similar, but will not function properly if installed in the wrong direction.

FIELD TEST GARAGE VIDEO



To help further illustrate which direction to install a Fel-Pro gasket, watch our Field Test Garage video at FelPro.com or on our [YouTube page](#).

GETTING ORIENTED

So how do you know which way a Fel-Pro gasket is supposed to face when it's being installed? Fortunately, in the case of head gaskets and intake manifold gaskets, most Fel-Pro gaskets have directional markings to help install them correctly when gasket orientation is critical to the installation.

Before we take a look at the different markings you'll find on Fel-Pro gaskets, let's talk about what we mean when we say **FRONT**, **LEFT**, **RIGHT**, **TOP** and **UP**. Different nameplates use different nomenclature in their OE service manuals for directional markings; for consistency in leveraging repair information, Fel-Pro works to follow the nameplate reference.

FRONT

What is the **FRONT** of the engine? This can be confusing, especially when dealing with a transversely mounted engine, which most front wheel drive vehicles have. The answer is quite simple though – **the front of the engine is the end where the drive belts are located.**



RIGHT AND LEFT

RIGHT and **LEFT** are determined from the driver's perspective – the industry standard. **If you were to install your gaskets on the left and right side based on looking at the engine from the front of the vehicle, the gaskets would be incorrectly installed.**



TOP OR THIS SIDE UP

TOP or **THIS SIDE UP** means that's the side of the gasket that **should be facing you once it's installed.**

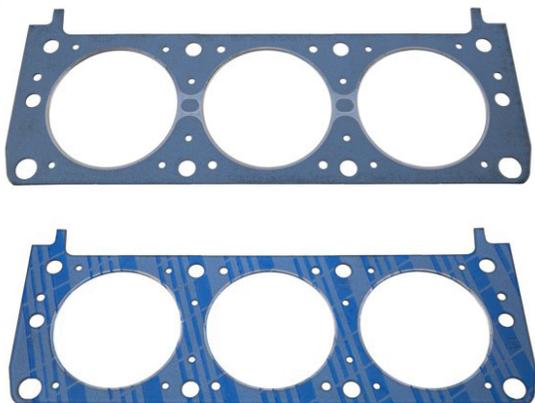


UP

The **UP** stamp is found on Fel-Pro head gaskets for Subaru engines, which have horizontally opposed cylinders. **The edge of the gasket with the UP stamp must be kept up toward the top of the engine block.**



NON-DIRECTIONAL GASKETS



In some cases, head gaskets or intake manifold gaskets won't have any directional indicators on them. They may have Blue Stripe® coating or be a different color. In these cases, it does not matter which direction the gasket is installed. If it were crucial, it would be marked.

For example, the Small Block Chevy and the GM 3.4L V6 head gaskets can be installed with the Blue Stripe coating facing the cylinder heads or the engine block. There are no directional markings on the gaskets.

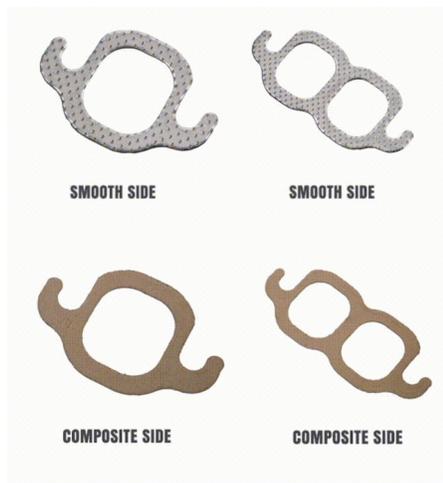
WATER OUTLET AND THERMOSTAT GASKETS

Water outlet and thermostat gaskets can be installed with the striping facing either direction, **as long as there are no directional indicators**. If there are bypass holes (indicated in red below), the gasket must be installed in the correct orientation to allow coolant flow.



EXHAUST MANIFOLD GASKETS

When installing Fel-Pro exhaust manifold gaskets, if there is a smooth, metallic side and a composite side, **the metallic side should be installed facing out**, meaning toward the exhaust manifold. This smooth surface of the shiny side will allow the flange of the exhaust manifold to slide as it expands and contracts during heat cycling from engine operation.



Visit [FelPro.com](https://www.felpro.com) to learn more about how our gaskets are designed for the repair environment to help seal imperfect sealing surfaces. Find Fel-Pro products with our easy [part finder](#) and products near you with our [part store and repair shop locator](#).

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