

# Series "M" Decal Placement

June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009

**Foreword** – The writer would prefer the title, “**If This Were My Tractor**” because if it were his, he would position decals as outlined in the summary sections. Heavy reliance has been placed on data furnished me from the Two Cylinder Technical Council along with a few photos of tractors that were convincingly original.

First, a hearty ‘thank you’ must be given to the many who aided in this effort, and to note also that from as many knowledgeable folks contacted, nearly as many diverse responses were received.

**Perspective** -- Today, restorers get wrapped around the axle on minute details like paint shade, brand & type, tire brand, wire versus band type hose clamps, the number of oval openings in rear wheels, steering wheel hub style, how many holes are in the seat, and – yes – decal placement. Once WW 2 came to a close and the record labor unrest year of 1946 was over, demand was so great that manufacturers went all out to produce as many tractors as possible each day. Some of these finer details weren’t all that important. After all, It WAS a farm tractor destined to function under dirty and demanding conditions. Farmers weren’t demanding super paint jobs – being more interested in spending their limited dollars on working tractors! Model “M” tractor production began in this very high demand period of time and pressure to produce was on every factory worker!

**Here’s a true story** -- During a young man’s college years he worked on an assembly line (Wooster, Ohio) where they built mail truck bodies. The line ran 30 to 32 truck bodies through per day – quick pace. This man along with another new employee were put to work fastening down the bed for the mail truck body. They received minimal instruction -- the foreman not one known for helping new people get started.

One day the worker that welded bumper brackets on didn’t show for work. And so my college friend was called to go back down the line four stations and weld brackets on four truck bodies that were not done. The quality of his work probably wasn’t as good that of the fellow who usually did it.

The point is -- people were moved around to fill empty spots to keep the line moving. In the course of a week such shuttling happened several times. Now if different fellows had to put decals on, you can quickly see where this story is heading! Some of these things were never the exact science we would like to think they were. As long as people did the placement, it varied some.

Now -- picture yourself installing decals on the assembly line. You did not measure every hood! You learned to eyeball the hood and slap the decal on! Plus, you have been allotted a fixed amount of time per tractor so as to be ready for the next one! Meanwhile you have a time-study guy, stop-watch in hand, trying to see how to make the line go faster. This – from someone who has Been There & Done That!! For lack of better words - An assembly line can be hell, and results will vary!

Does this help to put the job into perspective? Meanwhile restorers are going nutso trying to make a science out of all this – can't hardly be done!!

**Typical Factory Operations (March 2009)** -- One last observation to be made of factory operations is that while certain changes are planned for specific points in production, actual implementation may slide to a later point to consume old stock, and decal use is a prime example. So long as continued use does not detract from product quality, old stock is consumed before making the change. And so I fully expect to see some variance in hood decals on tractors from the guidance provided in this document -- guidance the key word!

**The Rule (March 2009)** -- if there is one; if, by steady, light sanding of your hood on down to bare metal, you are lucky enough to find the original decal to be a certain size, this is the size decal you should apply when that time comes.

Official Deere photographs were pored over, many quality field specimens were inspected by various individuals, and as one can imagine, no rigid rules can be drawn therefrom other than there ARE differences within same year of production runs. Correspondingly, “general” guidelines have been deduced, and the results follow.

**Photographs** -- The photographs in this piece are supplied courtesy of Dave Rouse of Rogue River, Oregon.

### Hood Decals

Research reveals three sizes of hood decals for “M” Series tractors which are production year dependent. Large was between 20 and 21-inches long and 2-1/2-inches high. Medium was between 16 and 16-1/2-inches long and 2-inches high. Small decals were 12-inches long and 1-1/2-inches high. The hood measures 48-3/4 inches, front-to-back.

### Hood Decals, Model “M” Tractors

**1947-48** -- take the large hood decal, installed been 7 and 8-1/2-inches back from the front grill line. It was noted, from sufficient specimens, that hood decals appear to have been centered -- making this one a matter personal choice.

**For 1947-48 examples, see photographs that follow.**

*Writer's Opinion* – That many in “the community” have assumed the “Waterloo hood decal placement” concept adopted from those tractors whose decals were centered until a point (November 1949) well into 1950 production!

**1949-50** -- take the medium-size hood decal, and this decal is generally centered on the hood.

**1951-52** -- take the small hood decal, and it is installed in forward-of-center position, and again, between 7 and 8-1/2-inches back from the front grill line.



**Note decal location is “forward”, and generally centered vertically on center rib.**



### Hood Decals, Model “MT, MC & MI” Tractors

**1949-52** -- The overall scheme of things is that hood decals be in the forward-of-center position between 7 and 8-1/2-inches back from the front grille line. Further, to use the 16-inch decal for 1949-50 production, and the 12-inch decal for 1951-52 production.

**Departures from The Plan** -- It is been noted, however, that departures from this "plan" have been discovered in MT-10825 (The Nebraska Test No. 423 Tractor, September 1949) and MT-11576 sold new to Roy Chamberlain of Linwood, Michigan by Karbowski Implement Company of Crump, Michigan in 1949. These two tractors were found to carry the 20-inch long hood decals characteristic of 1947-48 Model "M" tractors. The current owner of MT-11576 was able, in early 2009, to interview the widow of Dave Karbowski, the implement company owner during the post-WW2 years. As it turns

out, her memory seemed impeccable, even down to remembrance the 1949 buyer! This tractor comes at one-third the way through 1949 MT production. On these two tractors, we find the long hood decal positioned between 7 and 8-1/2" back from the grille line (forward position), as in the case for 1947-48 Model M tractors. With these or any tractors, if you have over-whelming reason to believe the original hood decals differ from "the guideline", apply "**The Rule**" found under the "**Typical Factory Operations**" paragraph cited above.

**NOTE:** "MI" decals will have black letters.

**"Be Careful" Decal Location** – Again, many diverse opinions have been entertained on the two "Be Careful" decals used for the "M" Series tractors. Concluding discussion for each follows.

The "**Be Careful**" decal to drive at safe speeds is centered on the upper seat back frame.

The "**Be Careful**" decal saying, "stop the power shaft when dismounting (PTO Safety)" is placed on the seat bracket (lower seat back). The recommended placement is directly over the power shaft. If the tractor is equipped with a red (rear) warning light, there should remain a minimum of 1/2-inch space between decal and light bracket. Finally, if your tractor has no power shaft (rare), do not use this decal!



**Be Careful Decals. The Safe Driving Speeds decal is centered on the upper seat back, and the PTO Safety Decal is position on the lower seat back (frame), and is directly over the Power Shaft (shown here with V-belt pulley installed).**

A strong voice was heard for placing this decal on the back of the hydraulic unit above the drain plug. It fits there pretty good and makes sense on a tractor without a belt pulley as it is right above where you have to unhook the PTO shield and it stays on the tractor when that shield is off. But these same voices then assume that for a tractor having a belt pulley, the decal would be on the back of that unit! Using these statements as guidelines for placement seemed impractical because, for one simple decal, we would have too many sub-rules – thus it is discounted.

**Summary for all other decals** – For decals other than those on the hood and the “Be Careful” decals, agreement is easier to arrive at. Thus, it is without hesitation that decal location summary for them is simply stated.

Two “**Servicing Instructions**” that say, “*Wash in gasoline every 120 hours or oftener under severe conditions*” are for two breather caps. One goes on the engine breather cap (in front of gas cap). Second one goes on the breather cap for the Touch-O-Matic filler pipe



**Here depicted is location of the Servicing decal for the engine breather cap**

(2<sup>nd</sup> one not used on “MT & MC”). Engine breather cover decal is to be read from right side of tractor, and Touch-O-Matic (under seat) decal should read from left side.



The second of two breather servicing decals on the hydraulic system filler cap. Note difference in size and wording for these two decals.

The "Service Air Cleaner Daily" decal goes on the Air Cleaner. Place this decal centered on the air cleaner's main body. If personal choice makes you elect to lower it, place the bottom of this decal at least one inch above the bowl clamp.



**The Service Air Cleaner Daily Decal**

The "Touch-O-Matic" decal is for the Control Quadrant ("M" tractor). Center this decal on right side of quadrant (control lever cover). Decal is placed parallel to ground level, and read from right side.

The "Dual Touch-O-Matic" decal ("MT & MI" Tractors) will be located on the right-hand Control Quadrant, and is situated as with the "M" Tractor.



### **Touch-O-Matic Quadrant Decal (Model "M" Shown here)**

The **Model Designator** decals, two per tractor, left & right are placed in the lower corner of grill. When finished, there should be 2-inches between decal and rear edge, and 2-inches between decal and bottom edge. However, verified originals were also found with this decal 1.5 inches and up, and 1.5 inches forward, and at points between 1.5 and 2 inches. Bottom line – if "your eye" tells you that 1.5 inches up and 1.5 inches forward of grille edges looks better, consider it as correct and run with it!



**Model Designator Decal, Left Side (above) and Right Side below**



Model designator decal placement/positioning is the same for all Models in the “M” Series (“M, MT, MC & MI”).



**Caution Decal located on the left-hand drawbar arm – Note orientation**

The “**Caution**” decal for the Drawbar is placed on top of the left-hand drawbar lift arm, one inch in front of eyebolt for lift chain, and centered on the space available. Decal is read from the right side (from inside the two lift arms), and will read from back to front.



**General Servicing Instructions Decal located INSIDE Battery Door**

The “**Servicing Instructions**” decal is for Battery Box Door. This decal goes on the **INSIDE** of battery box door. Center decal vertically. Position decal slightly toward the hinge so that its right edge is roughly at the horizontal midpoint. The Keyword here is **INSIDE** of the door.



### Trademark Decal Location Shown

The “**Trademark**” (Quality Farm Equipment) decal is horizontally centered on the Instrument Panel, 3/4-inches below the Light Switch/Serial Number Plate.

The smaller “**JOHN DEERE**” decal is for top of the front grill. It could be called a "nose" position decal. This 3/4" high decal is placed on the front of the grille, centered horizontally, and with its bottom 1-½ inches up from the seam between upper and lower grille sections.



## **JOHN DEERE on the Front of the Grille**

### **In Summary - - -**

**Research references** included parts catalogs, operator manuals, Deere studio photographs, pictures of tractors at Deere-sponsored shows and of tractors believed to still bear original paint. Contacts included the Two Cylinder Technical Advisory Council, several M Series tractor owners & collectors, and decalers. ++++