

How to replace a taillight on a 2004 Lexus SC 430

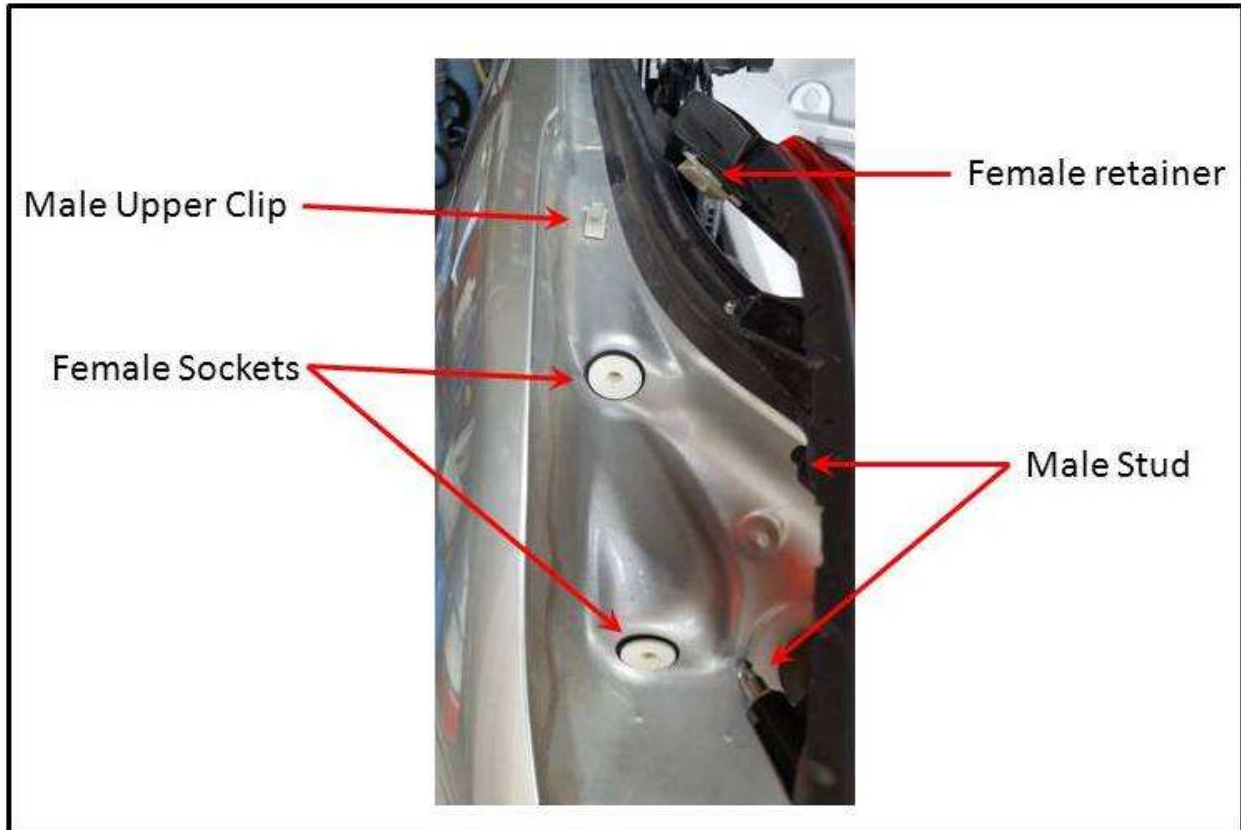
After reading many of the blogs of all the DIY's there seemed to be some conflicting information. Here is an explanation of removing the tail light assembly, with photos, to change a break light or taillight. I hope it helps. These photos are for the left light assembly. This right is the same but opposite. I'm assuming 2002-2010 SC 430 taillight assemblies are the same????



Open the trunk to expose the screw cover, which is technically on the outside of the trunk, but cannot be accessed without the trunk open. Remove the cap with a small flat blade screwdriver.



Remove the one #2 Philips screw. Then pull out the tail light assembly. Read on first....



As shown in the above photo with the taillight assembly just removed, there are two female sockets that have mating male studs and an upper (very fragile) plastic clip – see following photos. The clip is so thin I cannot believe Lexus used such a poor design. It is easy to break it on removing the assembly. Be sure you pull the taillight assembly straight out, perhaps slightly down to prevent breaking the clip. If you do break it, you can purchase a new one for under \$4, but I would have made one from sheet metal had mine broke.



Here is a close up of the plastic clip. You can see how thin it is.



Here is a close up of the female retainer the clip goes into. It's bonded onto the assembly. This gives you an idea on what direction to remove the assembly. Use a rubber sheet to help remove it by adding some grip or just strong fingers. Just go slow and be careful. I didn't know what was under there and used a plastic pry bar which seemed to help loosed the taillight assembly; the whole thing came off rather quickly when I overcame the friction of the two male studs from their mating female sockets. I'm not really happy with this entire design, seems Lexus could have done a better job.

I'm not going into how to actually replace the light bulb as once this taillight assembly is removed; the bulbs are replaced as in any car. Twist the bulb socket and pull out the light. The bulb pulls directly out from the socket. There is not a lot of wire harness slack, just enough to replace the bulbs. The SC 430 break light takes number 7443 bulb, which can be purchased at Walmart to save a couple of bucks over Toyota or other auto part stores. They carry Sylvania long life bulbs in a twin pack for about \$6. This entire replacement took me about 15 mins. I took my time and was careful removing the taillight assembly.