

Gas Strut for C320 Cockpit Portside Lazarette Cover
Neil Kornblatt Harmony #973 (2004)

Background:

Below is a description of how I installed a gas strut to support the portside cockpit lazarette cover on a 2004 Catalina 320, Hull #973. Please note that the strut is installed on the left side of the lazarette. Only a single strut is needed and the right side has complications for placement. Although new to the C320, even while still searching for a C320, I noticed how that cover can do some damage if "dropped," either to the lazarette or to the unlucky arm or other body part that was unlucky enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. I knew at some point I would want to take this on this project.

The materials cost is nominal and the biggest challenge was finding top and bottom bracket locations that would work. The project got kickstarted when I got the opportunity to see how Catalina installed a standard equipment strut on a 2015 C315. I took some pics and measurements and tried to apply it to the 320. However, it turned out there are some big differences between the two models. The four extra holes in my lazarette cover (a "badge of honor"?) is proof that locating the upper and lower brackets was a challenge I almost gave up on. I am guessing that over the course of about 20 hours of trial and error I installed about 30 different variations on bracket placement (with two different strut lengths) before finding what worked for me. Be forewarned a few of the measurements have fairly close tolerances. Also, you should know that the strut currently installed does a great job of holding the cover in an open position, but it still does not lower totally "softly". I have run out of time to experiment but I'm guessing that if you can find a strut with higher rating (60 pounds?) it will work even better. Also note that there is probably an even easier/better approach if your cover hinge is not a "continuous" or "piano hinge." (maybe more recent C320's?) . That would be by using the newer Gemlux "friction hinge". Since this is my first time describing a project such as this, I would be most comfortable discussing with anybody who wishes to tackle this to make sure all is clear.

Provide me an email and/or phone number to discuss more. kskis@aol.com

Materials:

Strut specs: 12" closed/20" open. "40 pounds" (At some point I will probably try 60 lbs if I can find it)

<https://www.amazon.com/inch-Prop-Spring-Strut-Heavy/dp/B00Y3H2P0Y>

Lower Bracket:

<https://www.iboats.com/shop/other-gas-spring-mounting-brkt-2-pkg-br-1020.html>







