

Installing new curved panels into lamps with metal clips

These directions are to help with fitting either original or newly made panels into a lamp where the glass is held in place with metal clips. You would think it would be easy enough- simply drop the glass into place and fold over the clips.

Because of the rounded shapes of the lamps and because the glass is being introduced from the inside of the lamp, one quickly realizes that getting the glass into place means getting the glass past the clips. At first the glass seems too big, because it can't seem to get past the upturned clips. Once one does get past these clips so the glass can settle into place, there are usually gaps between the glass and the clips.

The clips shouldn't be bent any more times than necessary. Bend them too many times and they will break from the bending back and forth. It would seem that bending them straight up should permit the glass to slip into place, but it is better to bend the clips back a bit further to allow the glass to get past the clips. Think of "outstretched arms." I use a putty knife or other thin blade when bending the clips. In fact, I often use two, one to do the bending and the other to back the clip so the bending occurs only where needed.

I suggest that you put your intact original piece in the space where the broken piece was, and the new piece where the intact original was. Don't fold the clips over at first. It is best to start by installing the original glass, not the newly made glass. Since this glass came from the lamp, it should fit. If the fit of each seems different, try switching them again, with the intact original going back into its previous spot. If the fit of each seems to vary, especially if the intact original fits into each space differently, the lamp is probably bent out of shape.

Sometimes the previous breakage was from a fall or blow to the shade. This can distort the shape of the shade, but if I don't work on the whole lamp, it may be difficult to get the glass to seat properly. If one isn't careful adjusting the shape of the lamp, metal parts of the shade can break or become over-bent. If you don't have me do the work, it is best to put this in the hands of someone accustomed to adjusting lamp shapes- either a local lighting store's repair person or a local stained glass store or crafter.

The important thing is to never force the glass. It can break and will snap if there is pressure that stresses the glass. See if adjustments to the clips can open up the space to receive the glass. If this seems impossible, take it to a local stained glass store where a bit of grinding on the glass can adjust the shape so it will fit in. Save your receipt and send me a copy. The few times that I have encountered this situation, I pay for additional work that needs to be done.

It is cheaper and easier to simply ship glass panels and not whole shades. It is difficult for me to know if there are additional factors that keep the glass from fitting easily and properly into place. I am available to discuss any problems where a good fit is difficult to achieve.