

# Fastload Switch

*Turn Your Fastload On and Off With This Easy To Install Switch*

I still had my 64 when I first bought my Fastload cartridge and it really was worth the investment; it did the job but there were "problems." I had to disable it to run some programs, but that was simple. I just pressed the English "POUNDS" key to switch onto the menu screen and then "D" to disable the cartridge. But there was the occasional annoyance of having to actually physically *remove* the cartridge in order to run some heavily protected software because it seemed, for some reason, just disabling did not always work. Still, I was able to live with that. My worst fear was that I would, at some point, absentmindedly forget and either remove or install the cartridge *while the power was on*, potentially destroying the cartridge and causing very serious damage to the computer. Fortunately that never happened. Then I bought my 128. I found I was not only spending much more time removing and inserting the cartridge in order to switch back and forth from the 64 mode to 128, but I was also beginning to cause significant wear and tear on the cartridge, the computer connectors and my nerves. Needless to say, my fear about forgetting to turn off the computer when I was inserting or removing the cartridge was compounded now that I was doing this more often. It was time to come up with a better solution. Because of the limited space on my desk there was not enough room behind my computer to install one of those multi-cartridge loaders I'd seen advertised. The cartridges are installed vertically and the placement of my monitor would not allow for this. When I explained my dilemma to my friend Luis, he said, "No problem, we'll put in a switch."

If you follow along with the instructions you should have no trouble installing this small switch in your Fastload cartridge. This whole project should take you no longer than an hour, and upon completion it should save you time, wear and tear, and eliminate the fear and worry of accidentally ruining your cartridge (or computer). You should be forewarned that by



Photo 1

installing the switch you are in effect voiding any warranty. Also, those who attempt this project should have some familiarity with soldering. You will need the following parts and tools (Photo 1):

- A small screwdriver
- A phillips screwdriver
- Three inches of double stranded wire
- A soldering iron and solder
- A small SPST switch (Radio Shack #275-645. Cost: approximately \$1.49)
- A sharp knife
- A 13/64 drill bit and drill

## Getting Started

1) The first step is getting the cartridge open. This is done by locating the small phillips screw that holds the two sides of the cartridge together. It is located in the center of the cartridge and near the bottom of the letter "a" in "Fast." Take the knife and, starting near the bottom of the letter "a," gently cut around the screw-head. If you desire, you can re-glue this small piece later, so be careful removing it. Remove the phillips screw and set it aside for later assembly. Next, make a cut along the paper in the rear of the cartridge following the seam already in the cartridge.

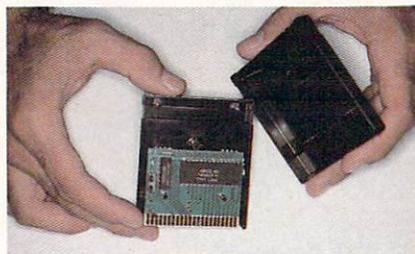


Photo 2

2) With the screw removed and the paper label slit, grasp the cartridge at the sides and at the opening and *gently* pull it apart. This may be the most difficult part of the whole procedure, so *be careful not to crack the plastic case as you apply even pressure*. You may need to use a regular screwdriver to help start and to pry apart

the two sections. As you begin to open it up, it is important to *keep the separation even all around*. (Photo 2.)

3) When the cartridge is apart, set the part with the electronic components aside. The other section is where the switch is going to be mounted, but first you have to locate where the hole is to be drilled. I drilled just between and below the "P" and the "Y" in EPYX, above the "a" in "Fast." You have some options here *as long as there is room below for the switch in the cartridge when it is closed*. Carefully drill the hole where you have decided you want it. The next step is soldering the wires to the switch. Prepare the wires by stripping away about 1/4 inch of the insulation and then tin all four ends and the two poles on the switch. (This entails coating them all with a small amount of solder.) Then carefully solder two wire ends to the two poles on the switch. Make sure they are not shorted.

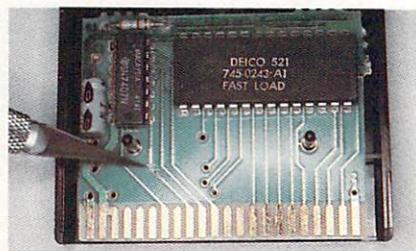


Photo 3

4) After the wires are soldered to the switch, locate the ninth position edge connector. Now, carefully cut the trace. Basically what you are going to do is place a switch across this cut. Make sure there is a small but definite separation. Now, scrape away just a little of the solder mask on each side of the cut on the trace. Take the soldering iron and tin the areas you just scraped *making sure NOT to apply too much heat*. Just a small amount of solder is all you will need. Work quickly so the heat does not build up. (Photo 3.)

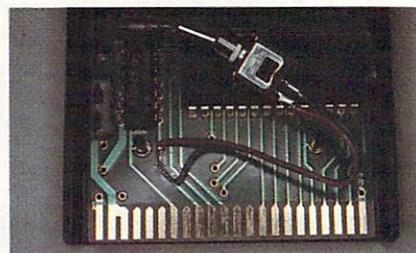


Photo 4

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My friend said, "No problem, we'll put in a switch."

5) Take ends of the wires that you have already soldered to the switch and gently solder each end to the scraped and tinned trace. It is not critical which wire is soldered to which side, but be very careful not to apply too much heat. Just a little should do the trick. (Photo 4.)



Photo 5

6) After you have soldered the wires from the switch to the trace, you must cut a small notch on the rib of the top section of the cartridge. Use your knife to cut away just enough so that the wires will not be crimped when the cartridge is back together. Now insert the switch in the hole and then screw in and tighten the retaining nut on top of the cartridge.

7) Re-assemble the cartridge by gently squeezing it back together and replace the phillips screw. (Photo 5.) Now install it in the slot in your 128 or 64 (Make sure it is turned off!) Turn on the computer. If nothing happened, the switch is in the OFF position. Turn off the computer, switch the switch, and turn on the computer again. You should now see the familiar Fastload message on your screen. If you didn't get these results, it will be necessary for you to go back and re-check each step of the instructions to find where you made a mistake. Check for shorted wires and bad (cold) solder joints. If all worked well, it will not be necessary to remove this cartridge again unless you need to install a different cartridge. Changing the switch while you are in either the 64 or 128 mode will have no effect at all. To use the switch you must turn the computer off (or use the reset button) and choose one of your options: Fastload on—(or off) in 64 mode by holding the COMMODORE key; or Fastload off to access the 128 mode. If you like, you can affix a label on your 128 to indicate which direction the switch should be for a specific function. C

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draulic whine of loader arms doing battle with the alien queen. Every game has its own group of sounds, each noise supporting the action on the screen effectively.

In conclusion, *Aliens* is a unique program for several reasons. First, it recreates key scenes from the movie of the same title and dares you to walk a mile in the shoes of a Colonial Marine. Six tough assignments will test your powers of observation, while putting you on the spot to

I had the chance to talk briefly with Steve Cartwright, the leader of the *Aliens* design team. Here are some of his thoughts and some tips for playing the game.

**Jermaine:** What led to the development of *Aliens*?

**Cartwright:** Believe it or not, Activision owned the software rights to *Aliens* a year before the movie appeared in theaters.

However, the in-house programmers, artists and game designers knew nothing about that arrangement. After seeing *Aliens* one afternoon, we all left the theater with the same idea: *Aliens* would be the perfect subject for a computer game. The next day I brought up the idea and found out that Activision already owned the rights to that particular property.

**Jermaine:** Can you tell me more about the early days of the project?

**Cartwright:** We planned out the entire program in fifteen minutes. It was just a matter of analyzing the movie, breaking it down into key scenes, and coming up with a game concept which recreates each particular situation.

The games were designed to share a common quality. When you participate in an *Aliens* challenge, your fate is truly in your own hands. Each game is a tough little assignment where experience is the best teacher. You can play to win or experiment with different ideas, but you can't blame the failure on random events or bad luck. These factors simply don't exist.

**Jermaine:** Did 20th Century Fox ask you to make many changes in the finished program?

**Cartwright:** There were some minor problems alright, but nothing we couldn't take care of right away. Twentieth Century Fox was very concerned about the fact that our transitional scenes contained direct quotes from the shooting script. I was led to believe that Activision might have to pay for the privilege of using that material in the program. Thank goodness our legal people investigated the situation and

make quick decisions at a moment's notice. Good graphics, special music, and a number of interesting sounds were also added to the scheme of things. The final result is a superior product which simultaneously challenges and entertains the person behind the joystick. If you have the guts to pilot a drop-ship, call the shots for a marine unit and wage a private war against an intelligent creature from another world, *Aliens* is definitely your cup of tea.

said everything was fine.

Another problem concerned the fact that you couldn't say the aliens were killing people. They were actually capturing human beings for later use (which would be the cause of their death). We also had to use the correct terminology for everything. You couldn't talk about a small alien creature crawling around on the floor. These little devils are called "Face Huggers." In short, the owners of the license were concerned about legal technicalities, correct terminology, and "good taste" at this time. We had kept in close contact with 20th Century Fox throughout the making of the program, so they knew all about the games and really liked the finished product.

**Jermaine:** Would you share some tips for playing *Aliens*?

**Cartwright:** The Armored Personnel Carrier is always located in the same corner of the building. Learn to move the marines in that direction and you'll eventually find it.

There are two basic rules to follow when you use the flame thrower: (1) destroy the fast-moving aliens by shooting blasts of fire in their direction and (2) use the flame of the weapon to back off slow-moving creatures.

The Newt Rescue Race is a race against time, where Ripley must conserve her ammunition in order to survive. When you confront the alien queen in the nest area, shoot at the nest, and the queen will move over to protect the eggs. Now is your chance to slip by her in the confusion and proceed to the elevator.

The best strategy in the One-On-One Confrontation is to keep hitting the queen with the power loader claws until she weakens substantially. While this boxing match is going on, the claws should also be used to keep the alien at bay. At the proper moment, grab the creature from below and eject it from the ship. One more thing—don't make your move on the alien queen too early in the battle. C