

'58-'62, INSTRUMENT PANEL REMOVAL

By Ron Dill

Norm McFadden recently posted the following set of instructions on the Corvette Preservation and Restoration News Group (<http://www.corvette-resto.com/>). Having had the "pleasure" of removing my instrument panel a couple of times, I thought the information was very helpful and obtained permission to reproduce it here. This information just might come in handy when the time comes to remove your instrument panel.

- Remove the vent operator. If you match mark the adjustable vent operator connection before removing the two bolts, reassembly of the operator is much easier. Removal of the vent operator is necessary to get at one of the hold down bolts for the instrument panel unit. If you leave this panel bolt out on installation, you shouldn't have to remove the vent operator the next time. I don't think that the instrument panel needs as many bolts as there are. Two out of the five would probably be more than adequate.
- Remove from the lower housing, the ignition switch, wiper switch and headlight switch. You don't need to take the wiring off of the switches, just push them back to free them from the housing. This frees the wiring harness from the housing.
- Take off the steering column attachment pieces. (*Note: I find access under the dash to be easier with the steering wheel removed. Editor*)
- Disconnect the oil gauge line at the back of the gauge. (*Note: You might want to secure the loose end of the oil line in a baggie – I always seem to get a drop or two of oil on the carpet. Editor*)
- Be sure that the speedometer cable is free enough out in the engine compartment to be pulled about 6 inches through the firewall. If it can't be pulled through the firewall as the instrument panel is pulled out, it has to be disconnected now at the back of the speedometer, and before reasonable access space is created in the following steps.
- Have an 18 to 20 inch long piece of 3/4" PVC pipe, wood rod, or equivalent ready.
- Pad the painted steering column and turn signal hub behind the steering wheel. Do a good job and make this well cushioned to protect the paint.
- If you didn't take out the hold down bolts for the panel yet, do it now.
- Lift the panel unit out of the dash toward the steering wheel. This might be hard if it is stuck in place. **Be patient.** Take your time and don't pull too hard on the lower panel housing or you can break/damage it.
- When the panel is free, pull it out towards, and set the front tips (below the tach), on the padded hub almost touching the back of the steering wheel.
- Put the pipe/rod across the dash opening and set the rear of the housing down on it. The panel is now supported.
- There now is relatively easy access to remove the light sockets and wiring from the back of the gauges as well as the speedometer cable. I labeled each of the wires as I went and left the labels on when I reinstalled which makes repeat jobs go easier. This way, you won't have to spend so much time with the wiring diagram.
- The instrument panel unit can now be lifted out of the car.
- Installation is the reverse of this process.
- I put a little Loctite PST anaerobic pipe thread sealant on the oil line nut threads and around the outside of the tube near the end where the nut swages to ensure that there wouldn't be any leakage.