

The Preventive Maintenance Series

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FC Stuff: Greenbrier, Corvan, Rampside & Loadside – Don't have one? Get one!

Shock Absorbers: Because of the short wheelbase, the FC models originally had super duty shocks on the front with a 2 1/4" diameter body. Replacement with anything less causes a really choppy ride. I recently installed the Monroe Magnum 34750 with excellent results. Installation does require a minor adjustment: removal of about 1/8" from both the lower mounting slots. That shock is listed for the front of a big Dodge pickup and if you check auto supplier websites such as O'Reilly, you will find the specs are very close to the Corvair shock. For the rear I used a less expensive gas shock from NAPA: 94002.

Steering Box Pitman Arm Nut: The large nut on the steering box pitman shaft may be loose, apparently from the factory since it does not have a lock washer. I doubt that the arm could ever come off due to the fit and age but the nut can block a clutch pedal if it backs off very much. Check yours since several FC's have shown up with that problem over the years.

Steering Column Noise: Both of my Greenbriers (1962) began making creaking noises when the steering shaft was under a load. The problem is lack of reinforcement under the floor. Looking up from the ground, a triangular plate that supports the steering box and floor is 3/8" short of reaching the floor towards the rear. It needs to be welded on two sides to prevent flexing and noise.

Greenbrier Air Intakes: As part of noise abatement, insulation was glued to the inside of the paneling along the engine air intakes. This insulation comes off (looks like a rolled up tube) and will partially block the holes at the rear of the intake shaft. GM issued a TSB, so the problem must have begun occurring early. Not an easy job to correct, but necessary for proper engine cooling. You will have to remove the screws on the inner panel, pull the panel out and use a tool to reach in and pull the insulation out. Not used on trucks.

Vent and Antennae Work: You can quickly and easily remove the headlight buckets if you need to work on the antennae, vent doors or cables – makes vent cable attachment easy.

Resistor By-Pass Wire: The wire from the starter solenoid that provides 12V to the coil during starter operation was omitted from some early FC models. My '62 was missing its wire and I have found several other FC vehicles with the same problem. The small yellow wire in the two wire connector at the forward left side of the engine compartment will be present at the connector but dead ends in the harness. Check your coil: if the + side has only one wire with an asbestos wrap then your resistor by-pass wire is missing. Either install one from the two wire connector or track it down in the harness. The function is to provide a hotter spark during cranking which could come in handy in cold weather.

Winter Helper: The '64 FC models had a door added behind the front grill that could be shut for winter operation; this was necessitated by persistent air leaks from numerous areas in the front panel. For pre-'64 owners you can take off the front grill, disassemble, and cover with wide black electrical tape; makes a big difference in winter highway driving.

Door Latch: The driver's door latch loses the spring (available now from CCP) and will not latch because the teeth have rotated downward. The immediate fix is to pull back the handle or push in the button and rotate the teeth upward (counter-clock wise) until they stop. It will latch again until the next time you shut it wrong.

Truck Bed Drain Holes: Thanks to Smitty Smith for this one. The two bed drain holes on the passenger side drain in to the underbody paneling before reaching the ground. Mud builds up and the water does not drain out. Smitty drilled two 9/16 holes clear through to the ground, cut 1/2" steel conduit to fit and welded at the top. The water would then drain to the ground as does the driver's side holes.

Transaxle Cover: If you want to be able to remove the cover over the transaxle to have instant access to starter, differential vent and filler or just want to watch your axles turn, you will first need to remove the nuts holding the heater plenum – the plenum is secured to studs protruding from the cover. Not easy, but you can remove the nuts, remove the cover and fabricate a support for the heater before re-installing the cover.

Heating & Defrost: FC air flow can be helped significantly by adding a high speed blower, separate ground to the heater box and a relay that directs battery current straight to the blower motor during high speed operation (eliminating voltage drops through all the wire runs, connectors and the switch).

Seat Adjuster: The seat adjuster may become very difficult to utilize, but the solution in most cases is very simple: lubrication. You may think the latch is bad, wire is stretched etc., when all you need is a can of spray grease and about two minutes. A little lube and a few trips back and forth it will be like new.

Rusted Brake Lines: Although all steel lines are subject to failure, the two places that fail the most frequent are the lines next to the gas tank where it is hard to see and at the ninety degree bend under the cargo area, forward on the left side. As with all aging vehicles, if it is old stuff, perform the stomp test in your driveway periodically.

Manual Transmission Popping Out Of Gear: Due to the long involved shifter and the movement of the engine/transaxle on the mounts, early manual transmission FC vehicles would pop out of gear, usually fourth, but sometimes other gears. GM added a bracket with a bolt & nut just to the rear of the shift coupler that limits the movement (to the front) of the power train. I have seen more than one design, and some may have been fabricated in the field. You may also find two, on either side lined up with the transmission mounts.