



**Application:** 1978-1982

## Door Panel Installation



### Tools Needed



The 1978 model year was a transition year for the Corvette. Not only was it the 25th anniversary of the production of the Corvette, but many changes were incorporated into the styling and assembling of the car, both interior and exterior.

One of these changes involved the method of mounting the door panels to the doors. Some early 1978 Corvette utilized 5 push-clips attached to metal brackets on the back of the door panel to actually fasten the door. At some point during the production year, this method of fastening was abandoned in favor of two screws as is described in the following instructions.

We have found that the door panels on a 1978 Corvette could be fastened to the door in one of the following 3 ways:

1. By using the 5 push-clips.
2. By using the 5 push-clips and 2 additional screws.
3. By using the 2 screws instead of the push-clips.

All Corvette door panels are designed to be used with the more common 2 screw mounting system. Our present panel will fit and work perfectly on all 1978 Corvettes providing the additional 2 screws are utilized.

Additionally, 1978 door panels may or may not have had a map pocket depending on whether the car was equipped with power windows or manual. All Corvette door panels are manufactured with map pockets. Door panels without map pockets can be special ordered.

### A. REMOVAL OF ORIGINAL PANEL FROM THE DOOR.

#### STEP 1.

Inspect the door panel or panels that you have received. Verify that they are the correct color and sides. LH and RH, and that the carpeting on the panel is correct for your Corvette.

#### STEP 2.

Open the door. If your Corvette is equipped with manual locking doors, remove the door lock knob from the armrest by unscrewing it from the door lock linkage.

#### STEP 3.

Remove the screw at the top rear corner of the door with a Phillips screwdriver.

#### STEP 4.

Remove the screw that retains the plastic escutcheon surrounding the door opening handle and remove the escutcheon from the panel.



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## **Description (cont.)**

### **STEP 5.**

If your Corvette is equipped with remote control mirrors, remove the two screws in the corner of the schrome escutcheon that surround the adjustment knob and remove the escutcheon from the panel. This will free the adjustment knob. The backplate on the rear of the panel is removed by straightening the retaining tabs once the panel is removed from the door.

### **STEP 6.**

Remove the 3 screws from the armrest. Two are located on the bottom of the armrest and the third is in the tip of the door handle pull section. With the two screws removed, the armrest should come free from the door.

With the armrest off of the door, inspect it for wear and tear. Replacement armrest units are available through Mid America Motorworks.

### **STEP 7.**

Remove the screw in the carpeted section of the door panel located just below and slightly to the rear of the armrest.

### **STEP 8.**

Remove the screw located in the top front corner of the map pocket.

### **STEP 9.**

If your Corvette is not equipped with power door locks, the bottom of the panel can be gently pulled away from the bottom of the door and then lifted up to free it completely from the door.

### **STEP 10.**

If your Corvette is equipped with power door locks, gently pull the bottom of the panel away from the door and then lift it up to free it from the door, but don't pull it away from the door. The power door lock switch will still be connected to the wiring harness. Reach behind the door panel and gently separate the switch from the harness.

The power door lock switch is held in the panel by a chrome bezel. The bezel has tabs that are bent flat against the back of the door panel that hold it in place. To remove the switch and the bezel, straighten the tabs on the bezel and pull the switch assembly from the front of the panel.

## **B. PREPERATION OF DOOR PANEL FOR MOUNTING**

Corvette door panels are designed to be used with all possible combinations of options that may affect the door panel. For this reason, a small amount of trimming and preparation is necessary to custom tailor the door panel to your Corvette's interior.

### **STEP 1.**

Turn your new Corvette door panel face down on a smooth, padded work surface.

### **STEP 2.**

With a single edge razor blade, trim away the foam and vinyl covering the hole for the middle armrest screw. Always start small and gradually enlarge the hole. Use your original panel as a reference and trim a similar sized and shape opening.

If your Corvette is equipped with manually locking doors, this opening also acts as a pathway for the door lock linkage rod. Be sure there is adequate clearance for the linkage rod.

### **STEP 3.**

Trim away the foam and vinyl covering the opening for the rear armrest screw. Again, start small and slowly enlarge the opening.

### **STEP 4.**

Trim away the foam and vinyl covering the opening for the door opening handle. Use your original panel as a reference.

Trim away only enough material to allow good freedom of movement of the handle. Additional trimming, if necessary, can be done once the panel is on the door.



## **Description (cont.)**

### **STEP 5.**

If your Corvette is equipped with remote control mirrors, trim away the foam and vinyl covering the hole for the control mechanism. Use the edges of the hole in the ABS back of your new Corvette door panel as a guide and trim the foam and vinyl to the same size.

### **STEP 6.**

If your Corvette is equipped with power door locks, trim away the foam and vinyl covering the hole for the power door lock switch. Use the edges of the hole in the ABS back of your new Corvette door panel as a guide and trim the foam and vinyl to the same size.

### **STEP 7.**

With an awl or other sharp, pointed instrument, punch holes through the door panel for the remaining 3 mounting screws. One is at the top rear corner of the door, one is at the top front corner of the map pocket and the last one is located just below and to the rear of the armrest.

Use your original panel as a reference to identify and locate the positions for these screws.

## **C. INSTALLATION OF YOUR DOOR PANEL ON THE CAR**

### **STEP 1.**

If your Corvette is equipped with power door locks, insert the power door lock switch and the accompanying bezel in the hole you have trimmed in the door panel. Be sure the switch is oriented properly and then bend the retaining tabs on the bezel flat against the door panel back to hold it in place.

### **STEP 2.**

If your Corvette is equipped with remote control mirrors, replace the backplate for the adjusting knob on the back of the door panel and secure it in place by bending the retaining tabs over the ABS door panel back. Hold the door panel next to the door and put the adjusting knob in position through the backplate. Replace the chrome escutcheon on the face of the panel and install the two philips head screws that secure the escutcheon to the backplate.

### **STEP 3.**

If you have power door locks, hold the panel near the door and connect the wiring harness to the power door lock switch.

### **STEP 4.**

Hook the top of the door panel with the felt attached over the top of the door and lower the panel into position. Be sure the door lock linkage is routed through the hole for the armrest if you have manually locking doors.

### **STEP 5.**

Place the armrest in position on the panel. Route the door lock linkage through the hole in the armrest, if applicable. Replace the two

### **STEP 6.**

With the armrest secured by the two lower screws, hold the front end of the armrest, the door pull section, tightly against the panel. Punch a small hole in the panel for the 3rd armrest screw by placing the awl in the hole in the armrest for the screw and pushing gently. Replace this screw once the hole is made.

### **STEP 7.**

Replace the remaining 3 retaining screws in the panel. One is at the top rear of the panel, one is at the top front corner of the map pocket, and the 3rd is just below and slightly to the rear of the armrest.

### **STEP 8.**

Replace the escutcheon that surrounds the door opening handle and secure it by installing the retaining screw. Do not overtighten.

### **STEP 9.**

Replace the door lock knob, if applicable, by screwing it on to the door linkage protruding through the armrest.

This completes the installation of your new door panel. Enjoy!