

1955-57 OFFSET LEAF SPRING INSTALLATION



Randy Irwin - Technical Writer

Randy has been involved in the Chevy parts business for over 30 years. He is a wizard at creating, making and modifying custom parts for Chevys.

The rear wheel openings on a 1955 passenger car are pretty much a rectangular cut-out in the quarter panel for the rear tires. If you look close enough at a 1955, you will notice the front of the rear tire is closer to the front of the wheel opening than it is to the rear of the wheel opening. With the installation of taller or shorter rear tires, it can be even more noticeable that the rear end is not centered in the wheel opening. On a 1956 or '57, the rear of the wheel openings are sloped to the rear of the car so it is not as noticeable as the 1955. However, when taller tires are installed on a 1956 or '57, the tires still crowd the front of the wheel opening. The front of the tire too close to the front of the wheel opening combined with the sloping of the rear wheel opening can give the car an odd look - almost like an altered wheelbase car. We will fix that issue in this article.



Parts Needed:

21-261 Offset Leaf Spring, 5-Leaf, Stock Height ▲

21-262 Offset Leaf Spring, 5-Leaf, 2" Lowered ▲

21-235 1955 Shackle Bushing Set

21-236 1956-57 Shackle Bushing Set

To order parts call 1-800-456-1957 or visit ClassicChevy.com

Tools Needed:

Floor Jack

Jack Stands

3/4" Deep Socket And Breaker Bar

9/16" Wrench

Time Frame:

4 Hours

Photo #1a & 1b & 1c: On 1955-57 cars, there is plenty of room to move the wheel rearward some so that it is not crowding the front of the wheel well. Positioning the wheel and tire toward the rear will give the car a longer, more pleasing look.

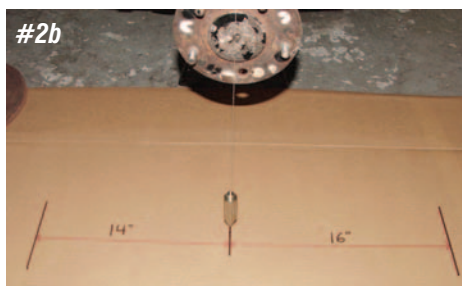
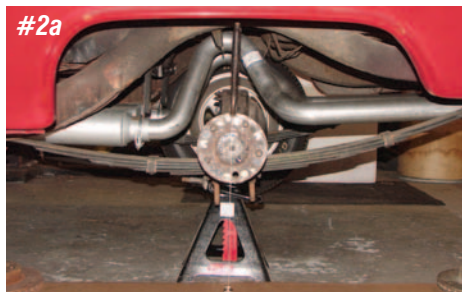


Photo #2a & 2b: On our 1955 we dropped a plum bob off the front and rear wheel openings and off the center line of the rear end. With the rear in the stock location, you will find that it is 1" closer to the front of the wheel opening than the rear.

Photo #3: The leaf spring pad or perch has a 3/8" hole in the bottom of it that fits onto the leaf spring center pin.



Photo #4: The offset leaf spring has the spring center pin moved to the rear of the spring 3/4" compared to the stock spring.

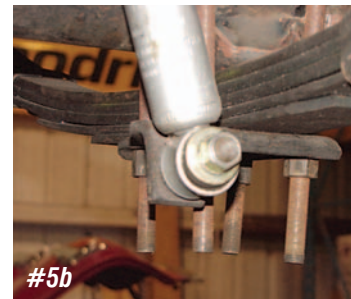


Photo #5a & 5b: The rear end housing is held to the leaf springs with two U-bolts on each side. The U-bolts wrap around the rear end and hold the lower shock plate in place.

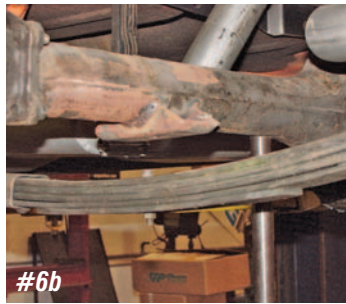
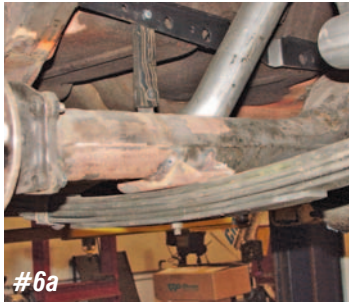


Photo #6a & 6b: With the frame on jack stands or the car raised on a lift, remove the shock absorber. Next remove the four nuts from the U-bolts and raise the rear end off the leaf spring one side of the car at a time.



Photo #7a & 7b: The leaf spring is anchored to a bracket on the frame in the front with a single 1/2" bolt and to the rear of the frame with a shackle. Our project car has the CCI Spring Pocket Kit P/N 21-131 that mounts the leaf spring parallel with the frame rails allowing for a larger tire. The removable of the leaf springs will be the same procedure as stock.



Photo #8a & 8b: Remove the front bolt and the rear shackle so the leaf spring can be removed from the frame.



Photo #9a & 9b: We are installing the 5-leaf, 2" lowering spring P/N 21-262. The rear spring eye is inverted to lower a passenger car 2". The new spring includes the forward eye bushing.

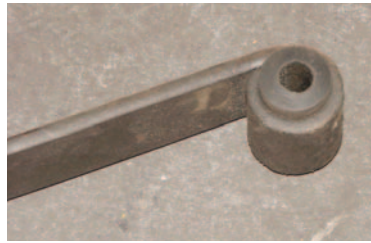


Photo #10: This is a good time to check your rear shackle bushings. The 1955 shackle uses the P/N 21-235 bushing set. The 1956 and 57 shackle uses the P/N 21-236 bushing set.



Photo #11a & 11b: Install the new leaf springs, leaving the front nut and bolt and shackle nuts loose at this time.



Photo #12: Lower the rear end down onto the spring center bolt and install the U-bolts, lower shock plates and shock absorbers. Torque the U-bolt nuts to 45-55 ft/lbs and torque the shock absorber nut to 35 ft/lbs.



Photo #13a & 13b: Install the wheels and tires and sit the car on the ground. Bounce the car several times allowing the leaf spring bushings to seat into place. Now tighten the front leaf spring mounting bolts and the rear shackle nuts. The front mounting bolts torque to 60-90 ft/lbs, while the rear shackle nuts torque to 25-30 ft/lbs.

By moving the rear end back only 3/4", the stock length rear brake hose will still work fine, the rear emergency brake cables will still work and there will be no issues with the tailpipes or driveshaft yoke. Good Luck. ▽