

1955-72 HEADLIGHT RELAY KIT



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.

One of the more common questions we get here at Classic Chevy is: "Why do my headlights flash on and off after they have been on for only a few minutes?" There is a set of points in the headlight switch that when overheated will act as a circuit breaker for just a second or two to cool the switch down and thus turn the headlights off. Sometimes it is just a weak or old headlight switch or a dead short to ground in the headlight wiring. More often, it is that you are overloading the stock headlight switch and causing the points to overheat and break due to modern halogen, Xenon or HID headlights. A stock sealed beam headlight only draws 12 to 15 amps. The stock headlight switch is rated up to 15 amps. A halogen headlight draws 15 to 18 amps, which is right on the edge. Xenon and HID kits can draw even more amperage, which certainly causes headlight switch failure. The best way to deal with higher amperage lighting is to route the power through a relay and let the relay carry the load. The new American Autowire Headlight Relay Kit installs inline with the factory or upgrade headlight harness and has one relay for low beams and one relay for high beams. The kit is complete with new 14 gauge wires and connectors to route from the relays to the headlights. The kit works for two and four light systems.



Parts Needed:

22-268 1955-72 Headlight Relay Kit

09-73 Headlight Bucket Grommets

09-08 Air Duct Grommets

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

Tools Needed:

Wire Cutters

Phillips Screwdriver

Crimping Pliers

Test Light

Time Frame:

2 Hours

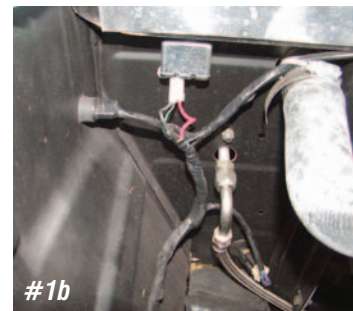
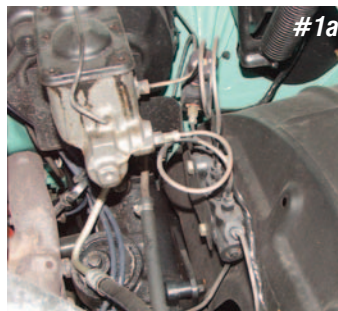


Photo #1a & 1b: The headlight harness exits the firewall on the driver's side firewall and is routed along the left inner fender. The harness splits at the radiator core support to feed the left and right side headlights, parking lights and turn signal lights.



Photo #2: The headlight relay kit includes two relays; one for high beams and one for low beams. The relays can be installed anywhere in the headlight harness as long as they are past the headlight dimmer switch. We chose to tap into the stock headlight

harness at the left front corner of the engine compartment and mount the relays next to the stock horn relay. The relays could be mounted behind the kick panel inside on the driver's side of the car if you like, but the tan and light green feed wires from the relays to the headlights would need to be extended.

Photo #3: On the 1957 cars, a great place to tap into the harness is where the headlight harness is plugged into the headlight bucket harness on the inner fender. Unplug the headlight harness from the headlight bucket harness and strip the electrical tape back from the connector about 2". You will find two tan wires and two green wires. This is the junction point where the driver's and passenger side headlight gets power.



Photo #4: Cut all four wires right from the jack. With the wires pulled away from any body panels so that they can not ground out, turn the headlights on, high and low beam. Using a test light, determine which tan and which light green

wire have power. These two wires will connect to the new relays. The other tan and light green wires feed the passenger side headlight and will no longer be used.

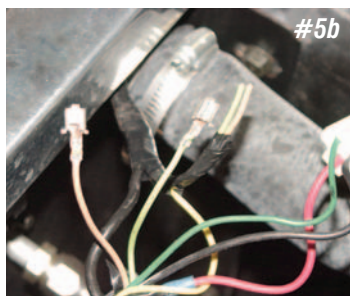
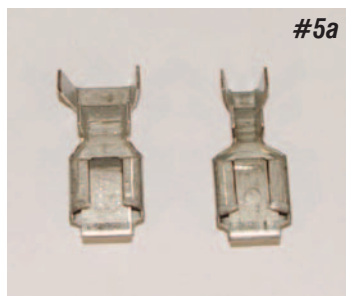


Photo #5a & 5b: The relay kit includes all the proper wiring connectors to attach the stock or aftermarket headlight harness to the new relays and the relays to the headlights. The relay kit includes six large spade connectors that are used to connect the relays to the headlights and two small spade connectors that are used to connect the headlight harness to the new relays. Strip the tan and light green wires back about 1/4" and install the wire connectors.

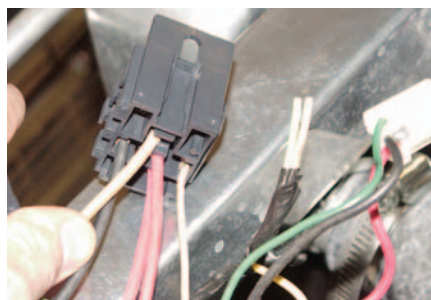


Photo #6: The headlight relay kit has two relays; one with a long tan wire for the low beam headlights and one with a long light green wire for the high beam headlights. Using the supplied

wiring diagram, connect the tan wire from the headlight harness to the relay with the long tan wire and connect the light green wire from the headlight harness to the relay with the long light green wire.

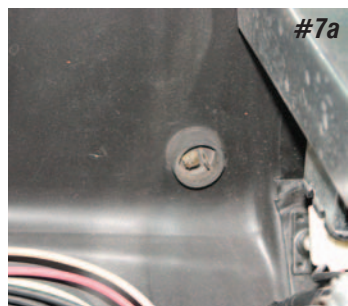


Photo #7a & 7b & 7c: The headlight bucket harness attaches to the inner fender and the back of the headlight bucket. Remove the headlight, unplug the harness, disconnect the ground and discard the harness.

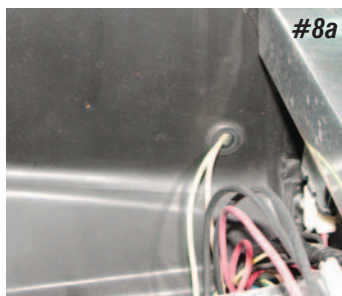
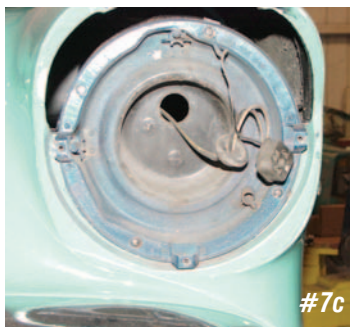


Photo #8a & 8b: Feed the tan and light green wires from the two relays out to the left headlight. We are routing our wires like the original headlight bucket harness. We used the 1957 air duct grommets **P/N 09-08** as the grommets at the inner fenders since they fit the original holes in the inner fenders perfectly. The headlight bucket grommets **P/N 09-73** snap into the backside of the buckets. Once all the wires are run to both headlights, we will tape the wires up for a clean factory look.

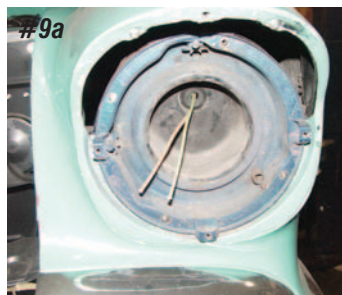


Photo #9a & 9b: With the wires routed to the left hand headlight cut the two wires leaving about 5" of wire hanging out of the headlight bucket. Now route the excess tan and light green wires back through the headlight bucket, inner fender and into the engine compartment. These two wires will be routed over to the right side headlight.

Photo #10: Now strip the ends of the wires and tie the two tan wires together and install one of the large spade connectors. Also tie the two light green wires together and install one of the large spade connectors.

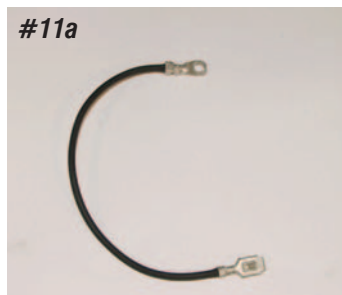


Photo #11a & 11b: Using the supplied black wire and terminals, make a 6" long ground wire. Attach the wire to one of the headlight bucket screws.

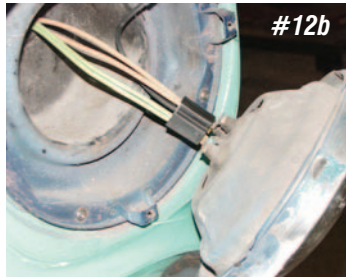
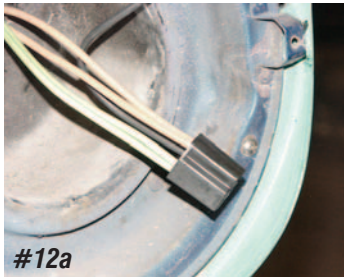


Photo #12a & 12b: Following the supplied wiring diagram, install the tan, light green and black wires into new headlight jack. The headlight can be plugged in and the driver's side of the headlight assembly can be put back together.

Photo #13: Feed the tan and light green wires across the radiator core support to the passenger side headlight. Remove the passenger side headlight light and discard the headlight harness. Now feed the two wires through the inner fender and into the headlight bucket. Cut the wires to length, install the wire terminals and headlight jack and reassemble the passenger side headlight assembly. With the new headlight relays taking all the load from the headlights, the headlight switch will never overheat and cause the headlights to flash on and off...no matter what type of headlights you use! Good Luck. 

