

" THIS ARTICLE IS INTENDED FOR YOUR REFERENCE ONLY.

ACTUAL PARTS, YEARS AND BODY STYLES CONTAINED

IN THIS ARTICLE MAY DIFFER SLIGHTLY FROM YOUR APPLICATION. "

1955-72 SMALL-DIAMETER HEI DISTRIBUTOR INSTALLATION

Replacing a points type distributor with an HEI (High Energy Ignition) type distributor is one of the best upgrades you can make to your classic to improve engine starting and reliability. With a points type distributor, you are always setting the points or replacing them along with the condenser. The HEI distributor is virtually maintenance free; change the distributor cap and rotor every 50,000 miles or so and you have a very reliable system. In 1975 GM started using the HEI distributors in all cars. This distributor is a great conversion/swap for the Tri-Five cars, but the physical size of the GM distributor will not allow it to be installed in the car with out modifying the firewall. In this article we will install our billet aluminum HEI distributor that is smaller in diameter than the stock original points distributor so there is no need for firewall mods. The distributor comes with a high performance coil that puts out 50,000 volts for hot starts and longer spark plug life. This unit will fit all 1957-up small or big block Chevy engines.



#26-39



Photo #1: There's not much room behind the engine where the distributor fits on a 1955-57. Even the stock distributor is tight. To remove the distributor, the cap must be removed to clear the firewall.

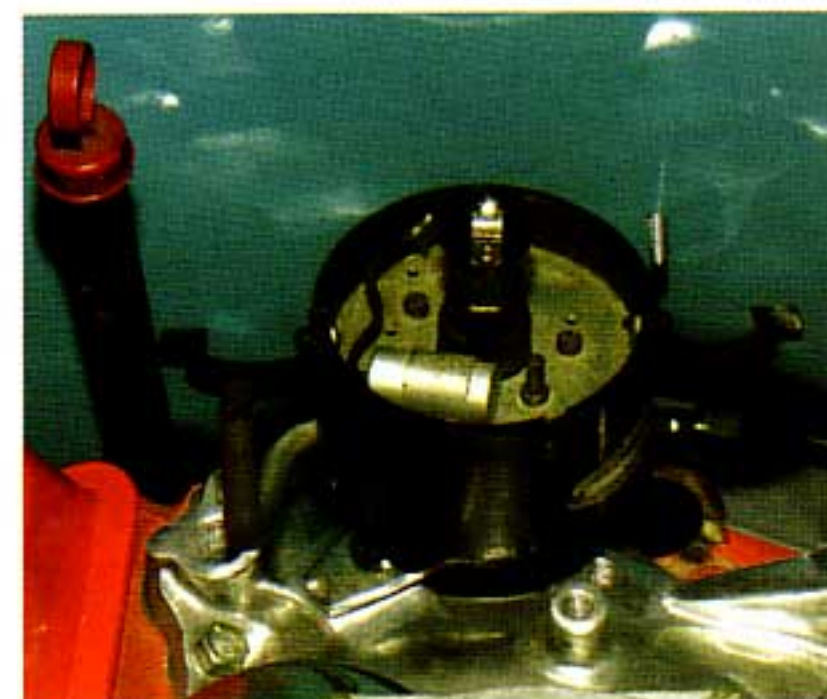


Photo #2: Before removing the distributor, rotate the engine with the starter until the ignition rotor is facing directly forward. This is how you will orient the new distributor when installing it.



Photo #3: Remove the distributor hold down on the intake manifold and disconnect the points lead wire on the negative side the ignition coil. Raise the distributor up and out of the engine. You can see how tight the distributor is to the firewall as you raise it.

Parts Needed:

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 26-42 | 1955-72 Small Diameter HEI Distributor |
| 26-11 | 1955-72 Black HEI Plug Wires, Stock Routing |
| 26-39 | 1955-72 Blue Moroso HEI Plug Wires, Stock Routing |
| 26-41 | 1955-72 Blue Moroso HEI Plug Wires, Over Valve Cover Routing |

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

Tools Needed:

9/16 Wrench

Time Frame:

2 Hours



Photo #4: As you can see, the large GM HEI will not fit unless you want to take a hammer to the firewall.



Photo #8a, 8b & 8c: There is a female jack on the distributor that the new three wire harness will plug into. The male plug on the new harness has a wire clip that will need to be depressed, allowing the harness to plug into the distributor.



Photo #5a & 5b: The new P/N 26-42 distributor is brand new, not rebuilt. It is all billet aluminum and is a direct bolt-in for your small or big block engine. The new distributor includes a set collar that will not be used in our applications. Remove the set screw from the set collar and slide it off the distributor housing. Install the new base gasket on the distributor.

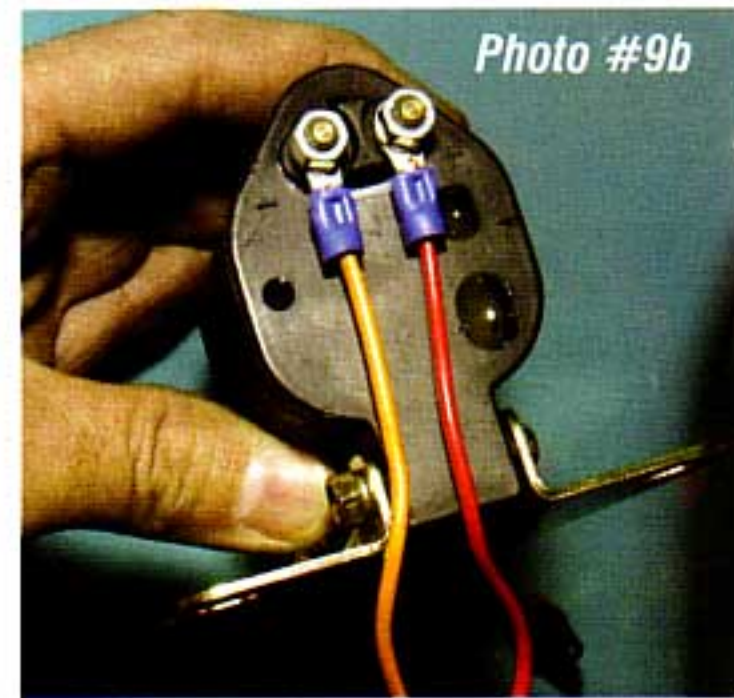
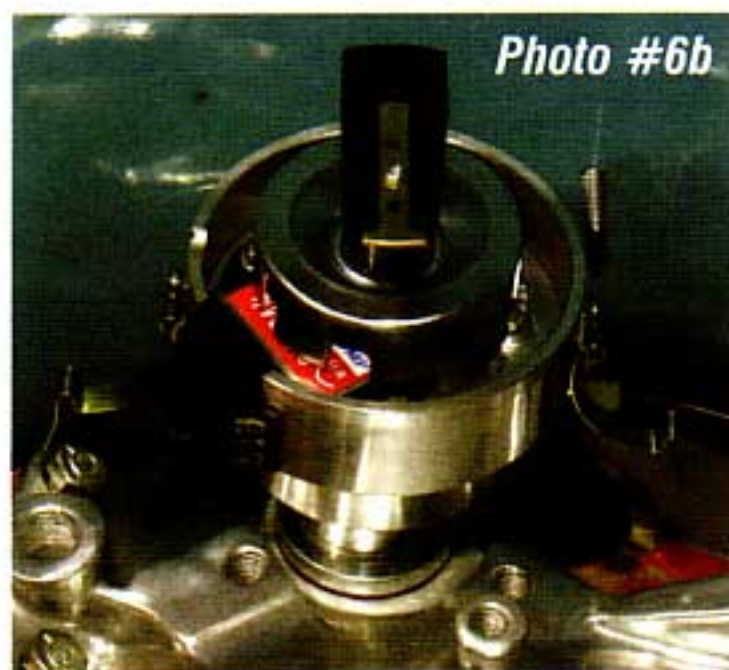


Photo #9a & 9b: The high energy ignition coil has a positive and negative terminal. The orange wire from the distributor harness connects to the negative (-) side of the coil and the red wire connects to the positive (+) side. The new ignition coil does not require a ballast resistor. On a 1955-57, connect the brown wire that ran to the ballast resistor to the positive terminal on the new ignition coil.

Photo #6a & 6b: Lower the distributor down into the engine

while keeping the ignition rotor facing forward. At first the distributor may not drop all the way into the engine. The oil pump shaft is driven off the lower gear on the distributor and may prevent the distributor from dropping all the way into the engine. Apply pressure to the distributor housing with your hand and with the starter, rotate engine around until the distributor drops in.



Photo #7: The distributor is held in place with the stock distributor hold-down.



Photo #10a & 10b: The new harness also includes a black wire. This wire must connect to a good body ground. The coil can be mounted anywhere on the firewall or under the dash. The wiring harness can be routed inside the car which will clean up the engine compartment nicely.

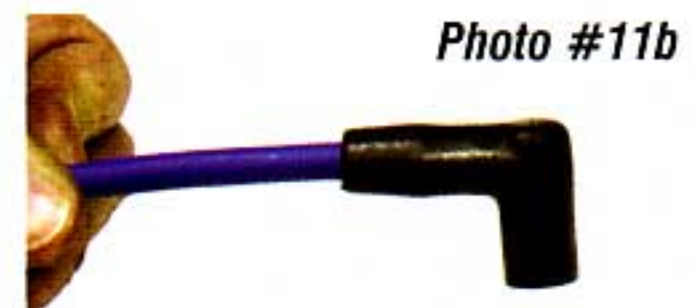
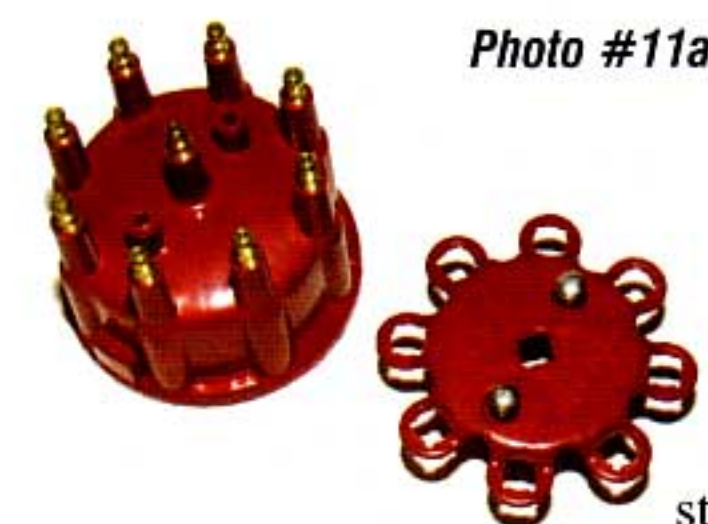


Photo #11a & 11b: The new distributor cap utilizes only HEI style spark plug wires. The HEI cap has a screw-on retainer that will hold all the wires in place.

YOU CAN DO IT EASY UPGRADES



Photo #14: Install the new spark plug wires onto the distributor in the same order as the ones from the stock distributor and install the spark plug wire retainer. Re-gap the spark plugs to .045”.

Start the engine and set the timing with a timing light to the specifications for your engine. The new distributor is mechanically advanced so there is no vacuum hose to connect or disconnect when setting the timing. Be sure to plug the vacuum source that once lead to the old distributor. With the new HEI ignition system you will experience greater reliability, quicker starts and reduced maintenance.

Good Luck. ✓