

1955-57 9" FORD REAR END DISC BRAKE 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 Chevs.

Rear disc brakes can be the icing on the cake when it comes to a brake system. They don't put rear disc brakes Chevettes but they do on Camaros and Corvettes. It's all about getting that horsepower and speed stopped in time. Putting disc brakes on the rear not only shortens the stopping distance, they look terrific through large diameter open wheels. In this article we will install rear disc brakes on a new 9" Factory drum brake rear end that the owner wanted to upgrade. We also offer rear disc brake conversions for the stock rear end as well as GM 10 and 12-bolt rear ends.



Parts Needed:

- 20-118 Rear Disc Brake Kit, 9" Ford, 1/2" T-Bolts, Large Axle Flange
- 20-250 Rear Disc Brake Kit, 9" Ford, 1/2" T-Bolts, Large Axle Flange With Drilled And Slotted Rotors
- 20-252 Rear Disc Brake Kit, 9" Ford, 3/8" T-Bolts, Large Axle Flange
- 20-253 Rear Disc Brake Kit, 9" Ford, 3/8" T-Bolts, Large Axle Flange With Drilled And Slotted Rotors

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

Tools Needed:

- Jack and Jack Stands
- 9/16" Socket, Extension and Ratchet
- 3/8" Wrench
- 9/16" Wrench
- Adjustable Wrench
- 3/8" Allen Wrench
- Cutoff Wheel

Time Frame:

6 Hours

Photo #1: To install the new rear disc brake kit, the rear drums and backing plates need to be removed. First, back off the rear shoe adjusters and remove the brake drums.

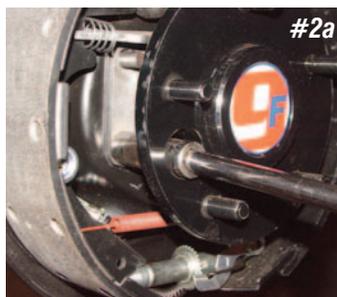


Photo #2a & 2b & 2c: The rear axles are held in the rear end housing with an outer retainer plate between the axle bearing and the axle flange, just like on an original 55-57 rear. Remove the four nuts behind the axle flange and using an axle puller or the drum with a couple of lug nuts on the wheel studs, pull the axle out of the rear end housing.

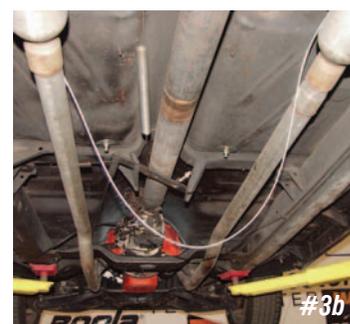
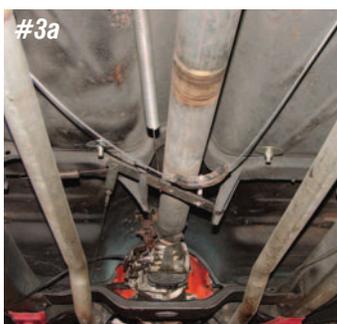


Photo #3a & 3b & 3c: Next disconnect the emergency cable from the front yoke and from the bracket on the inside of the frame rails. The cables can remain connected to the backing plates and emergency brake levers on the rear shoes.



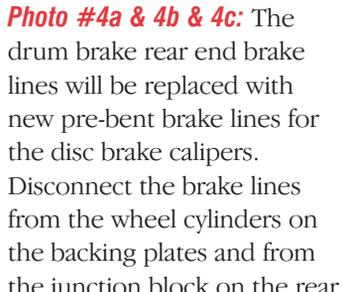
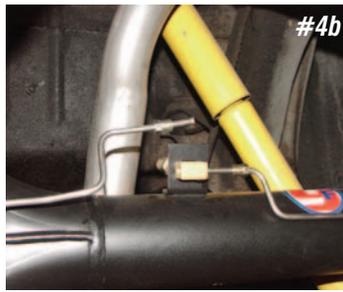
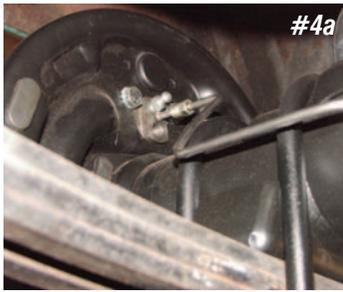


Photo #4a & 4b & 4c: The drum brake rear end brake lines will be replaced with new pre-bent brake lines for the disc brake calipers. Disconnect the brake lines from the wheel cylinders on the backing plates and from the junction block on the rear

end. With everything disconnected from the backing plates, the backing plates and emergency brake cable assembly can be removed from the car.



Photo #5a & 5b: The stock bearing retainer is no longer

needed so it must be removed from the axle. The axle bearing can be pressed off to remove the retainer, but you run the risk of damaging the bearing. We used a cutoff wheel and cut the plate into two pieces.

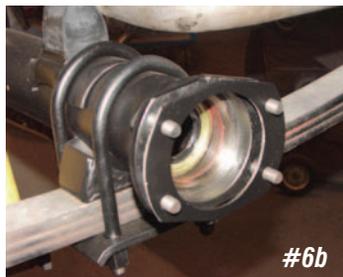


Photo #6a & 6b: A spacer is installed on the end of the axle housing to take the place of the brake backing plate. The original backing plate T-bolts can be used with the new disc brake brackets.

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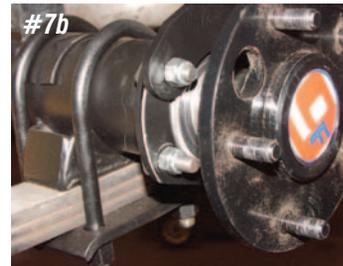
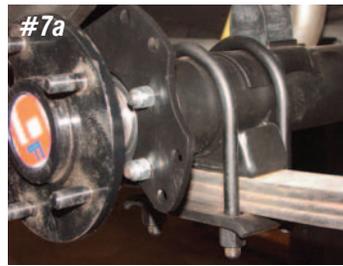


Photo #7a & 7b & 7c: The inner disc brake bracket mounts to the rear end housing using the two upper T-bolts and the one lower rear T-bolt. The inner bracket will support the outer caliper bracket and also serve as the axle bearing retainer. Install the axle into the rear end housing and then the inner disc brake bracket. Install the four nuts onto the T-bolts and torque the nuts to 35 ft/ lbs.



Photo #8a & 8b: The outer disc brake bracket bolts to the inner bracket with four 3/8" X 2" bolts. The outer bracket bolts to the inside of the inner bracket and has four spacers to properly align the caliper with the rotor. Torque these bolts to 35 ft/lbs.



Photo #9: The brake rotors have the Chevy 5 on 4-3/4" bolt pattern and will fit the 7/16" wheel studs on the converted Ford axles. Using a couple of lug nuts, bolt the rotor into place. This will hold the rotor in place while installing the brake caliper.

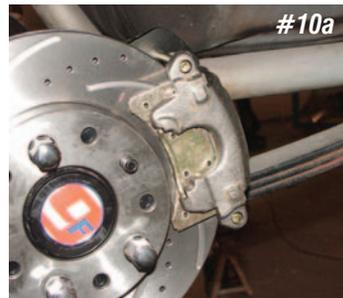


Photo #10a & 10b: The caliper is held to the outer bracket with two 7/16" anchor bolts. Place the caliper over the brake rotor and bolt it into place. Torque the anchor bolts to 24 ft/lbs.

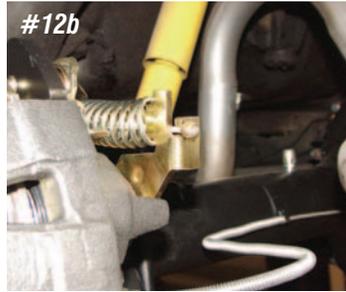


Photo #11: With the caliper installed over the rotor, the emergency brake eccentric in the caliper will need to be adjusted. Using an adjustable wrench, move the emergency brake lever on the caliper forward toward the front of the car five to ten times until the brake

pads make positive contact with the brake rotor. If this step is skipped, the rear calipers will never bleed properly. Once the car is road worthy you will want to use the emergency brake often to keep the rear calipers adjusted properly.



#12a



#12b

Photo #12a & 12b: A new one-piece rear emergency cable is supplied with the kit allowing the new rear disc brakes to be connected to the stock emergency brake adjuster under the car. The cable clips into the bracket on the caliper and the ball end of the cable hooks into the eccentric lever on the caliper.



Photo #13: The new cable also connects to the original rear emergency brake cable bracket on the frame using clip **P/N 34-114**.

Photo #14: The cable should normally be routed under the tailpipes. Our project car has a custom exhaust system that would not allow that. With the cable connected to the linkage, adjust the linkage so that the rear emergency brakes are activated with the emergency brake handle pulled out half way.



#15a



#15b

Photo #15a & 15b: A banjo block is supplied to connect the brake lines to the calipers. A banjo bolt with a copper washer on each side of the banjo block holds the block to the caliper.



#16a



#16b



#16c

Photo #16a & 16b & 16c: The kit includes pre-bent brake lines that connect the calipers to the original brass junction block T on the rear end. The lines are bent to match up with the contour of the Ford rear and clip into the stock tabs on the rear end.



#17a



#17b

Photo #17a & 17b: The new brake like kit also includes new brake lines to be used between the brake master cylinder and the GM style proportioning valve under the hood. If your car has a dual master cylinder and the GM style proportioning valve, the front reservoir is connected to the top front port on the valve and the rear reservoir is connected to the top rear port on the proportioning valve. The new master cylinder lines are going to criss-cross the lines between the brake master cylinder and the proportioning valve. This is necessary when using the Cadillac rear calipers.

With all the brake lines connected and the emergency brakes adjusted, the brakes can now be bled. The system can be bled the conventional way by pumping the pedal and opening the bleeder valves or can be bled with a pressure bleeder. With the brakes bled, take the car for a ride and enjoy the new stopping power! Good Luck. 