The original 1955-57 steering box was a very compact and efficient box that had the steering shaft made into it. Unlike the 1958-newer GM steering systems, the 55-57 cars don’t actually have a steering column; they have a mast jacket. The steering shaft in the box fits into the mast jacket forming the steering column. When replacing the original steering box with an aftermarket power steering box, the area between the top of the box and the original mast jacket gets very tight. So tight that installation of the proper flex coupler (rag joint) becomes impossible unless the mast jacket is cut and shortened. In addition, the original steering shaft must be cut from the original steering box to be used with the new power steering box which ruined the original steering box. Fortunately Classic Performance Products (CPP) has developed a new mast jacket (steering column) kit that includes a reduced length mast jacket and automatic shift tube complete with steering shaft. The CPP column kits offered by Eckler’s Classic Chevy are unique in that ours include the proper flex coupler (rag joint) for your steering application so you don’t have to go searching for extra parts to complete the job. In addition, we are the only supplier offering the column for use with the Borgeson/Mullins Delphi box. The new steering column will bolt into place with absolutely no cutting or welding.

Tools Needed:
- Philips Screwdriver
- 7/16” Wrench
- 1/2” Deep Socket And Ratchet
- Electrical Tape
- 5/16” Allen Wrench
- Electric Drill And 5/32” Drill Bit

Time Frame:
4-Hours

Photo #1: The original steering box is much shorter than the replacement power steering boxes like the CPP 670(500), the GM 605 or the Borgeson/Mullins Delphi(600) power steering boxes.

Photo #2: The original mast jacket (steering column) protruded out the firewall about 3-1/2”. Since the aftermarket power steering box is taller, the stock mast jacket is too long.
Photo #3: The stock mast jacket can be modified by using the Eckler’s Classic Chevy Kit P/N 53-400, which will require cutting and welding. Refer to classicchevy.com for a copy of the instructions.

Photo #4: The new CPP steering columns include a completely new automatic transmission mast jacket and shift tube, a steering shaft to connect the steering wheel to the flex coupler (rag joint) and the flex coupler to connect the steering shaft to the power steering box. The CPP column kits exclusively from Eckler’s Classic Chevy work with the CPP 670(500), the GM 605 or the Borgeson/Mullins Delphi(600) power steering box.

Photo #5: The new column is 3-1/2” shorter than the stock mast jacket. This gives plenty of clearance for the tall power steering box and the flex coupler.

Photo #6: The top of the new column is exactly like the original mast jacket. The original shift collar, turn signal housing and components all fit the new column.

Photo #7a & 7b: The first thing to install at the top of the new column is the washer that fits under the shift collar. The 1955 and 56 columns have a washer with a tab that keys into the mast jacket P/N 53-48. The 1957 column washer has a bent tab that is attached to the mast jacket with a Phillips screw. This part is not reproduced. After installing the washer, lubricate the shift tube with a light grease and install the shift collar. Make sure the shift collar slides up and down the shift tube smoothly.

Photo #8a & 8b & 8c: Next, grease both sides of the thrust washer P/N 53-49 and install onto the shift tube on top of the shift collar. This thrust washer fits between the top of the shift collar and the bottom of the turn signal housing to provide both a bearing surface and proper spacing between the two parts. Next, install the turn signal housing locking plate included in the upper steering column rebuild kit P/N 53-22 for 1955-56 and P/N 53-23 for 1957 cars. The locking plate keys into the top of the steering column and holds the turn signal housing in place.

Photo #9: The turn signal housing is held to the locking plate with three machine screws. Before installing the turn signal housing, make sure the turn signal switch and wires P/N 22-09 for 1955, 22-266 for 1956 and 22-267 for 1957 and upper steering column bearing P/N 53-21 are in good working order. The turn signal switch is held to the bottom of the turn signal housing with two #8 machine screws. There is a spring steel clip that is pushed onto a stud on the bottom of the turn signal housing to hold the wires for the turn signal switch in place.

Photo #10: On 1955-56 cars, the turn signal and horn wires route on the inside of the mast jacket. Using a piece of welding wire or coat hanger, tape the wires together and pull them down though the mast jacket exiting out the hole in the lower side of the mast jacket.
**Photo #11:** The turn signal housing will center up on the top of the shift tube. As you are installing the turn signal housing, align the three holes in the housing with the three threaded holes in the locking plate. The upper steering column rebuild kit includes three #8 machine screws and serrated lock washers to hold the turn signal housing in place.

**Photo #12a & 12b & 12c:** With the turn signal housing in place, the upper bearing and horn wire can be installed. The bearing fits in the center of the turn signal housing and supports the upper end of the new steering shaft. The wire should be fed down through the inside of the mast jacket like the turn signal switch wires on 1955-56 columns.

**Photo #12a & 12b & 12c:** A nylon roller is included in the rebuild kit that fits on the pin on the right hand side of the actuating ring. The detent spring is also included and hooks to the upper lower posts on the turn signal housing. The “V” in the center of the spring will match up to the nylon roller and keep tension on the actuator. Apply a small amount of grease to the nylon roller.

**Photo #13a & 13b & 13c:** A new turn signal actuating ring and pivot stud are included in the upper column rebuild kit. The ring has a pin that keys into the turn signal switch and the pivot stud screws into the turn signal housing holding the actuating ring in place.

**Photo #13a & 13b & 13c:** The canceling pawls and spring are also included in the rebuild kit. The pawls fit on the upper and lower studs and the spring keeps tension on the pawls. The two rubber bumpers fit in the two channels in the actuating ring. With everything assembled the new column is ready to be installed in the car.

**Photo #14a & 14b:** Notice the lack of clearance between the top of the power steering box and the firewall.

**Photo #14a & 14b:** The new column kit includes the flex coupler (rag joint) to connect the power steering box to the steering shaft in the new column. The bottom of the coupler has the proper spline that will key onto the steering box and is held to the steering box with an Allen head pinch bolt.
new mounting holes must be drilled in the column. Make a photocopy of the online diagram and cut the template out of the diagram. Place the template on the column and mark the column where it needs to be cut. Using a cut-off wheel or hack saw, remove the section of column for the new neutral safety switch. Using the template, drill two 5/32” holes and mount the switch to the column with two #6 sheet metal screws.

Photo #23: The new column also has the slot cut in it for the indicator wire for the shift indicator in the instrument cluster.

Photo #24a & 24b: The original mast jacket was held to the firewall with a squeeze-type bracket that was mounted on the engine compartment side. With the taller steering box, the coupler and the shorter steering column, the original bracket will no longer work. The new mounting bracket supplied with the CPP column kit mounts to the inside of the firewall using the same two mounting nuts as the original clamp and has a stainless steel band clamp to anchor the column to the bracket. Leave the clamp loose at this time. This really cleans up the firewall and gets rid of that ugly original bracket. Remove the neutral safety switch and slide the new column bracket and clamp down to the bottom of the column and reinstall the neutral safety switch. Leave the band clamp loose at this time.

Photo #25: Now slide the new column assembly over the steering shaft and bolt the lower bracket to the toe board using the supplied hardware.
**Photo #26:** The top of the column is held to the dash with the stock clamp. On 1955-56 cars, there are upper and lower brackets with a rubber strap P/N 05-33 that wraps around the mast jacket. There is a tab on the lower mast jacket clamp that keys into a notch in the mast jacket to keep it from rotating when the shifter lever is moved. Wrap the rubber strap around the mast jacket using some black electrical tape to hold it in place. Now mount the column to the dash, leaving the two nuts loose at this time.

**Photo #27:** Install the steering wheel and torque the center nut to 35 ft/lbs. With the steering wheel in place, the clearance between the bottom of the steering wheel and the top of the turn signal switch housing can be set by moving the mast jacket up or down. The Chevrolet assembly manual shows that the clearance should be between .056” and .085”; 1/16” is perfect if you are using a tape measure to set the clearance. With the clearance set, tighten the band clamp at the toe board and the bracket at the dash. Enjoy your new column!