**You Can Do It** by Randy Irwin

**1955-57 AFTERMARKET AIR CONDITIONING VENT 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.

Installing the factory air conditioning vents along with an aftermarket A/C system has always been a neat idea. The vents that are supplied with most aftermarket A/C systems are made of black plastic with chrome highlights and are pretty much a universal vent. The factory vents now reproduced for the Tri-Fives and are a very nice piece but are quite expensive and do have the look of a 1950’s car. A custom A/C vent has been developed that is less expensive than the reproduction original vents and matches up to the curvature of the 1955-57 dash perfectly. The custom vent has a chrome pot metal bezel with a chrome plastic diverter. These custom vents are slightly smaller than the original A/C vents for a more modern, pleasing look. We include our own custom templates for 1955-56 and 1957 with the new vents to make the installation a breeze.

**Parts Needed:**
54-199  1955-57 Air Conditioning Vents
To order parts call 1-800-456-1957 or visit ClassicChevy.com

**Tools Needed:**
3/16” Drill Bit and Drill
2-1/2” Hole Saw
Thread Locker
Half-Round File
Air Grinder
Carbide Cutting Bit
3/8” Nut Driver
5/32” Allen Wrench

**Time Frame:**
3 Hours

**Photo #1:** On a 1955 or 1956 passenger car, the custom A/C vent mounts to the dash just off center of the seam on each side.

**Photo #2:** Here is a comparison of an original vent and the custom vent. The custom vent is smaller than the original which will give the interior of the car a more custom look.

**Photo #3:** The custom vents P/N 54-199 include a template for a 1955-56 dash and a template for a 1957 dash. The templates can also be used to install the a/c vent in various other cars with some fabrication as long as the car has a sloping lower dash edge.

**Photo #4:** The template will show the location of the upper hole for the vent bezel and the location to drill the 2-1/2” hole for the duct hose. Using an awl, punch two small holes in the template where the holes will be drilled in the dash.
**Photo #5a & 5b & 5c:** The template for a 1955 and 56 has a horizontal line that will line up with the lower edge of the dash trim or dash break. There is a vertical line that will line up with the seam in the dash. The template can be turned over and used on the passenger side once the driver’s side is completed. Tape the template in place and use a pen or sharpie to mark the dash where the holes will be drilled.

**Photo #6:** Before doing any drilling, either pull your carpet back or cover it with a plastic garbage liner. Metal shavings and carpet just don’t mix (actually they do and they stick together!) Using a SHARP 3/16” drill bit, drill the two holes. The upper 3/16” hole will be correct for the mounting stud on the bezel. The lower 3/16” hole will serve as guide for your 2- 1/2” hole saw.

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**Photo #7a & 7b:** Using a 2-1/2” Bi-Metal hole saw, carefully drill the lower hole in the dashboard. The 2-1/2” hole will need to be shaped into a tear drop hole for the a/c duct hole.

**Photo #8a & 8b:** The vents include all needed mounting hardware. The top of the a/c vent bezel is held to the dash with a #8-32 stud, nut, flat washer and lock washer. The bottom of the bezel is held to the dash with a counter sunk #8-32 machine screw with a flat washer, lock washer and nut. The A/C bezel will be used to mark the dashboard where the 2-1/2” hole must be trimmed and shaped to clear the duct hose. To disassemble the vent, unscrew the black plastic neck on the back of the vent assembly and the air diverter can be removed.

**Photo #9a & 9b:** Install the stud into the hole in the vent bezel. A couple drops of thread locker here is a good idea. Next mount the vent bezel in the dash using the supplied flat washer, lock washer and nut. Snug the nut like you are installing the vent for the final time, making sure the vent is straight up and down on the dash.

**Photo #10a & 10b:** Using a marker, mark the dash where the 2-1/2” hole will need to be trimmed for the duct hose.

**Photo #11a & 11b:** Using a half-round file or an air grinder with a carbide bit, cut up to the inner edge of the line you marked on the dash.

**Photo #12a & 12b:** Install the bezel back in the dash and using the bezel as a guide, mark where the lower hole will need to be drilled. Drill a 3/16” hole for the lower mounting screw.
Photo #13a & 13b & 13c: Assemble the vent and check for clearance between the neck of the A/C vent inlet and the dash. There needs to be 1/8” of clearance between the neck of the vent and the dash for installation of the duct hose. Additional trimming may be necessary.

Photo #14a & 14b: The custom A/C vent bezels really fit the contour of the Tri-Five dash nicely and look far better than the hang-on plastic vents supplied with the A/C kits! Good Luck.