



Tech Talk



C-5 & C-6 Automatic Transmission Shift Cable

Source – Larry Rains – Retired Auto Mechanic Instructor

This is the first article I am writing that I haven't actually done the work. The reason I am writing about replacing the shift cable is that it has failed on several friends Corvettes. I'm talking about C-5 & C-6 automatic Corvettes. It seems when they get about 7 to 10 years old and they break you cannot shift the car. What most friends have experienced is, it is in park and the shifter moves but is not connected to anything. It can break at either the transmission or the shifter. It is costing between \$500 to \$800. The cable itself is not breaking; only a plastic bushing. GM has no fix but to replace the entire cable. Some people are buying new plastic bushings at places like AutoZone and making the old cable work. Others are drilling and tapping so a bolt can hold in place. Realize, I have never worked on this cable so I have no real experience. Here is a brief procedure on how to replace the cable.

You can do everything from under the car. There is no need to remove the shifter. The exhaust and tunnel plate must be removed which is the hard part. Pop the cable off the ball connector at the shifter with a screwdriver. Pry the metal clip out using needle nose pliers. There are two tabs on the large side of the cable that goes through the mount. Depress the tabs and push the cable back through the mount. The transmission side is basically the same and held in by two nuts. Remove the cable end of the ball connector by prying it off. Remove the mount first and then the cable.

The main purpose if this article is to warn members before the breaks and leaves you stranded. You might want to fix it sooner than later.

Follow-up information on above article

This is a follow up to the above article after hearing about more failures. If the shifter cable doesn't break the shifter itself may. Have heard from friends who were faced with this problem. The shifter may only operate at a reduced efficiency. Maybe it only works in a few gears or will not go into Park. If the shifter needs replacement it will cost several hundred dollars. There are no cheap parts on a Corvette. Also, the shift solenoid may stop working. If this happens the car will not come out of Park. Keep that battery charged and that may help. I have never replaced this solenoid but I'm sure the console will have to be removed. Some people have wired the plastic pawl in the shifter so they don't have to replace the solenoid. It's wired so the shifter will not lock in Park. The only bad thing with this is you could take the shifter out of Park at any time. You would have to push the brake pedal first, by the way. More to worry about. Hopefully, you won't get caught shiftless.