

The Preventive Maintenance Series

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Electrical Tips.4

The following are electrical gremlins that have actually occurred on aging Corvairs, sometimes through no fault of the cars.

- A '65-'66 turn signal switch that works fine mechanically but will not light up one side of the system unless you hold down on the lever may have a slightly bent contact pin in the switch that you can "slightly" bend back and restore complete function. Remove the steering wheel and observe the movement of the plastic canceling plate. As you move the lever from left to right you will see the pin for the opposite side exposed towards the bottom. You can use a small ice pick type tool to gently bend the pin (the direction will be obvious). Not much bending is required and you can overdo it, so work carefully and you will be rewarded with saving the cost of a new switch.
- If someone installs an 1156 backup light bulb in a brake light or front turn signal socket instead of the correct 1157 bulb you will experience the dash lights coming on when you hit the brakes and the turn signal indicators both coming on when you pull the headlights on. The incorrect bulb with one center contact has caused the two separate circuits to become one.
- Headlight problems on early model cars and FC vehicles such as dim or loss of lights on one side can be the ground. There is one screw located center top that provides the headlight ground. It has to ground the headlight wires to the pod and of course the pod has to be grounded to the body. A problem in this area usually turns up right after a paint job when the headlight pods were removed for body work. The dimmer switch will usually be the cause of no headlights when you pull the switch on or loss of headlights when you used the dimmer switch during headlight use.
- If you install a rebuilt starter, rebuild a starter, or install a new solenoid and encounter a *no-starter-engagement* problem when using the ignition key, there may be two possible reasons. The first may be too great of a voltage drop through all of the various connectors and switches (6 if you have a Powerglide). The second and more recent occurrence is the use of Chinese manufactured solenoids. The problem is this: the solenoids are constructed with fewer windings (I weighed them and they weigh less than the original) and to compensate for this big money saver they made shorter and softer return springs. If the new solenoid is installed with an original spring you will need a perfect voltage supply or the solenoid cannot pull in against the stiffer spring. They appear to work satisfactorily if you use the spring supplied with them. I know this from experience!