

9th April 2015

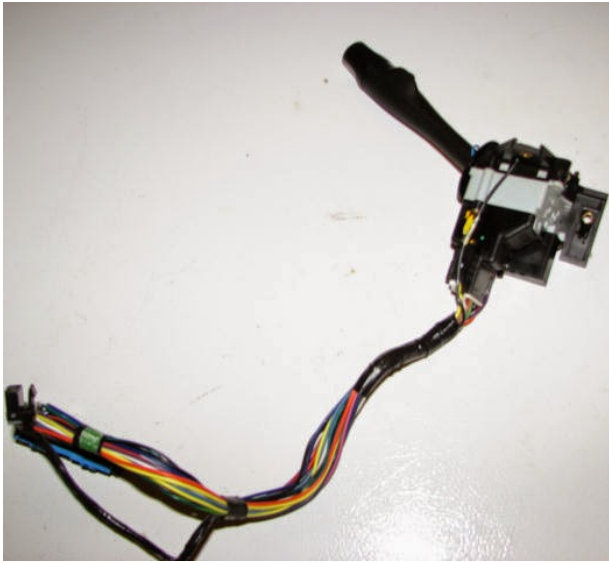
Headlight Switch Repair (MIKER)

Headlight switch repair

My headlight switch failed. The headlights would come up and turn on but the dash lights and tail/running lights were not working. I searched the forum archives and found that this is a very common problem. The price for a new switch ranges from ~\$150 - ~\$200. Apparently dealerships charge up to ~\$700 for parts and labor.

I decided to do exploratory surgery on the switch being that it was already “broken.”

Opening the switch and finding the problem was easy. Initially I completely removed the switch but ended up plugging it back up while diagnosing the problem. I found that the contact points that actuate the dash and running lights had lost too much spring tension to close tightly enough to make a good electrical connection.



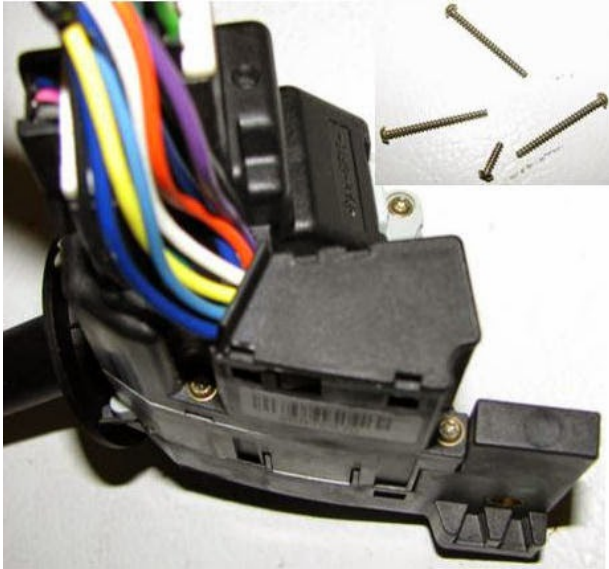
[\[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-7npThNftBGc/VScu3tN9bLI/AAAAAAAAAC1Y/CnjlzHsI108/s1600/light_switch_01.jpg\]](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-7npThNftBGc/VScu3tN9bLI/AAAAAAAAAC1Y/CnjlzHsI108/s1600/light_switch_01.jpg)

To sum it up quickly I simply increased the tension of the contacts so they will close with more force. Problem solved. Price \$0. How long will this repair last? I have no idea but I will update this post if it fails before this thread goes into the archives.

In reality, it took me a few hours of trial and error to finally figure it all out and get it right. I could do the job MUCH faster now. It takes about 30 to 60 minutes to disassemble the car, remove the switch, reinstall the switch, and re-assemble the car. Between all that, the switch repair should take less than an hour.

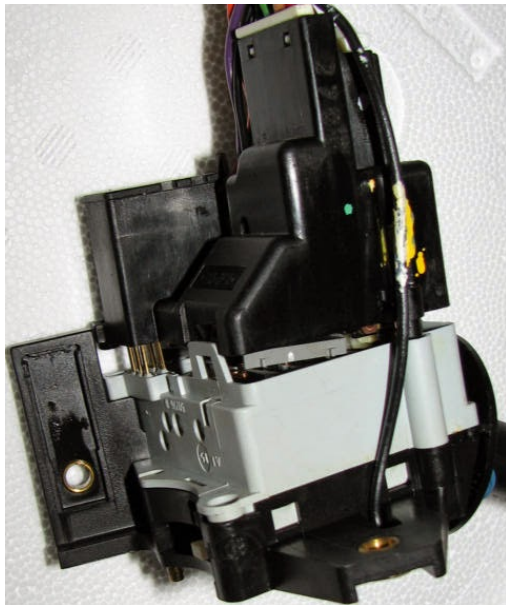
Here's a few quick pics to give an idea of what it looks like:

You only need to remove the three long screws (T8 Torx). The short one holds the other half of the switch together.



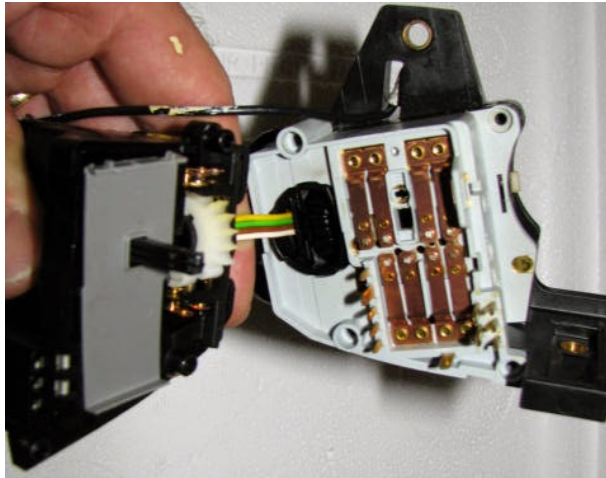
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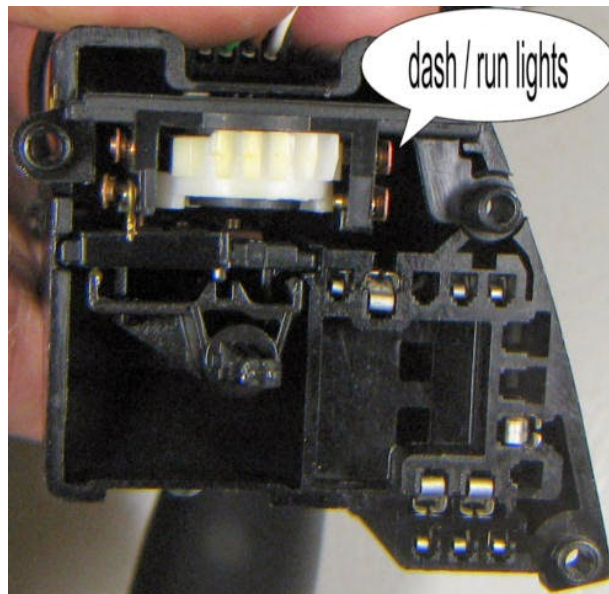
[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-7HXkg2B6yM4/VScu3nSgIXI/AAAAAAAAAC1U/-QzDvu4bPlo/s1600/light_switch_02.jpg]

Remove the grey colored shield/cover.



[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-HOMreFZYjzA/VScu3mTT8YI/AAAAAAAAAC1c/Efxa_2zRvkU/s1600/light_switch_03.jpg]

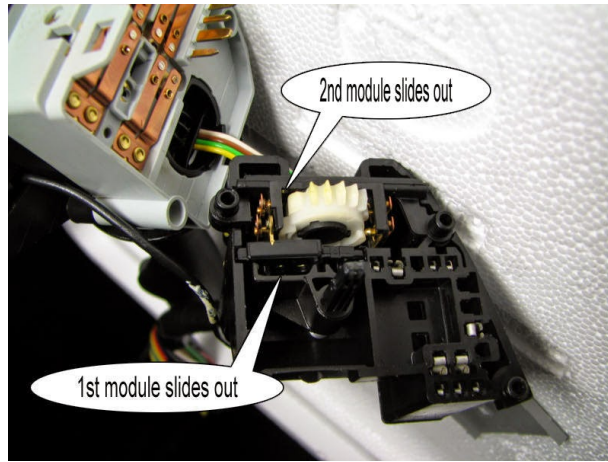
This contact point [http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-tucFkp-jF0U/VScu4TjbC8I/AAAAAAAAAC1k/wiKkKnQSjBY/s1600/light_switch_06.jpg]



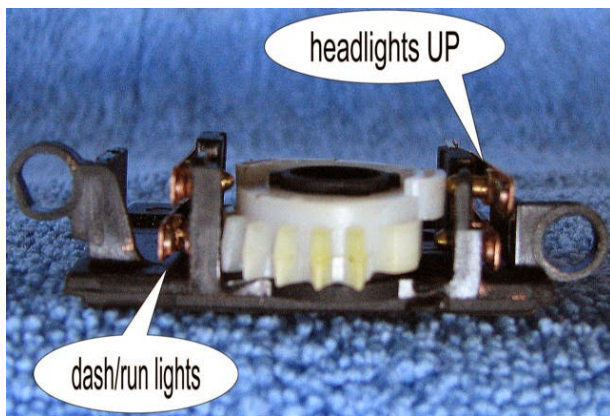
[https://2.bp.blogspot.com/-tucFkp-jF0U/VScu4TjbC8I/AAAAAAAAAC1k/wiKkKnQSjBY/s1600/light_switch_06.jpg]

fails to close properly causing your dash lights and running lights to remain off. When the headlights are turned on.

To adjust the tension on these contact points, use needle nose pliers to slide the two modules out of the switch. The arrow points to good places to pull from.

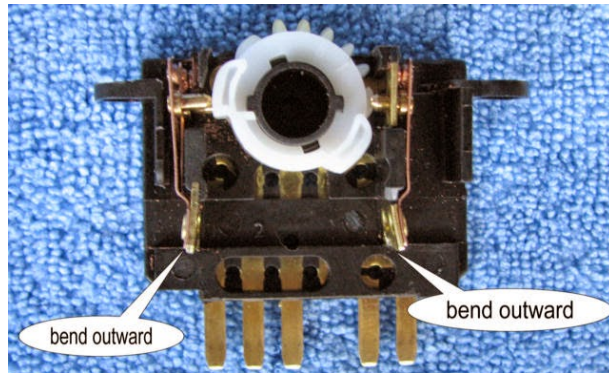


[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-usZejk2MbQA/VScu4hFoM0I/AAAAAAAAAC1o/QXooy2BQTOE/s1600/light_switch_07.jpg]



[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-JYYI9WRNiw8/VScu4Uk8-ul/AAAAAAAAAC2E/SVysyXXadU4/s1600/light_switch_05.jpg]

To increase tension on the contact points, bend these tabs outward. This forces the points to close together tighter. If simply bending these tabs outward doesn't create enough pressure on the contacts, you can bend these tabs inward, thus raising the contacts, then bend the contact arms downward followed by bending the tabs outward for increased overall pressure. I cannot think of a better way to word this so just study your options carefully while performing this adjustment.



[[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-hzu5VZfBpCc/VScu4LfDcPI/AAAAAAAAAC1g/WajjFQyWnmo/s1600/light_switch_04.jpg)

[hzu5VZfBpCc/VScu4LfDcPI/AAAAAAAAAC1g/WajjFQyWnmo/s1600/light_switch_04.jpg](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-hzu5VZfBpCc/VScu4LfDcPI/AAAAAAAAAC1g/WajjFQyWnmo/s1600/light_switch_04.jpg)]

Just another view.

Based on research about improving the performance of contacts, do not use dielectric grease on the contacts. It will reduce their performance. Dielectric grease is excellent for electrical contacts that are bolted together, clamped together, plugs, etc. but not for contact points.

I ended up lightly cleaning the contacts with 2000 grit sand paper followed by alcohol and a toothbrush. EDIT TO ADD: >> Do Not Sand Electrical Contact Points. I have learned that sanding the contact points removes the protective layer and this will cause it to fail prematurely!

IMPORTANT: After re-assembling the switch, be sure to plug it in and verify that each and every function of the switch works properly prior to reinstalling the switch and interior parts. << END OF EDIT.

This repair certainly isn't for everyone as buying/installing a new switch is a sure cure but for those who like to tinker should find it to be a worthwhile adventure.

I plan to shop around for a good deal on a spare switch just in case this one doesn't hold up.

Headlight Switch Removal

[jedicowboy](http://www.corvetteforum.com/forums/members/35787-jedicowboy.html) [<http://www.corvetteforum.com/forums/members/35787-jedicowboy.html>]

I did not write these instructions. They were posted on the forum and I searched my izass of to find them. Unfortunatley I cannot remember the author

1. remove the two screw on the knee pad under (Torx head screw).
2. use a thin screw driver to lift the small panel out around the trunk release switch and disconnect the switch connector..remove the screw behind the trunk release switch panel.
3. lift the small (vent looking) panel next to the ignition switch and remove the screw behind it.
4. Pull the knee pad panel out...there is a couple of spring load clips (friction fastener) holding the panel in on the left side of the panel.
5. Remove the two torx head screw under the the cover for the steering column just below the steering wheel.
6. Split the top and bottom section of this cover and remove the bottom cover. (Top and bottom covers at jointed at the base with small hooks on each side). The top cover would not be removable yet.
7. Remove the two Torx screws (silver in color...this is extended out verse the indentation you have on normal screw head...if you don't have a socket for torx, try using a small hex socket) from underneath...they hold the top half of the cover. Then remove the top cover.
8. Remove one top screw on the top part of the steering holding the turn signal switch. The second one faces you on your lower left when you are sitting in the car...try turning the steering wheel to the left so the flat part of the airbag is on the left for easier access. THIS SCREW IS KIND OF TRICKY...DON't STRIP THE TORX HEAD!!! I didn't

have the right tool so I use a Torx head socket and use a slip joint plier to turn it slowly....I think it is best if you have a torx head that is the right size (25) that fits into one of those multifunction screw driver head is best then you can use an rachett box wrench or an open wrench to turn it. Loosing this is remove all the way by fingers (this is the most time consuming part). Replace switch by attaching the two screws back then swap the two connectors with the old/bad switch....

Note (added by [steveC5 \[http://www.corvetteforum.com/forums/members/21318-stevec5.html\]](http://www.corvetteforum.com/forums/members/21318-stevec5.html))

One thing I would add is step 8.5

8.5) You may have difficulties pulling out the switch wiring connectors due to clearance issues reaching with your hand. If that is the case you can remove the knee pad bracket (metal piece with styrofoam attached.) It is connected with 4 torx screws (2 on each side.) Once it is removed you should be able to pull the connector out with no problems.

9. Reinstall the rest in reverse order....If you have the right tool for the last torx screw...you should be able to do this in less than 30 minutes.

Note (added by [steveC5 \[http://www.corvetteforum.com/forums/members/21318-stevec5.html\]](http://www.corvetteforum.com/forums/members/21318-stevec5.html))


Add to 9) When reinstalling in reverse order, you may need to loosen up the trim around your stereo and climate control to allow the knee pad to smoothly get underneath the overlapping stereo trim. Also keep in mind the 2 lower screws of the knee pad may be a pain. I found the best way is to attach the knee pad is with the 2 lower screws already "punched in." Also insure the clips where these 2 screws will screw into are properly positioned (one fell out on me and I had to clip it back in) so you don't end up digging around guiding the screws into the holes (that you cant see.)

For the interior temperature sensor, I had the best luck disconnecting it's cable and removing the sensor completely from the knee trim. Once the knee trim is installed and the cable is "hanging out" from the overlapping openings of both knee and stereo trims, simply connect the cable back to the sensor and insert the sensor assembly into the opening. The sensor assembly will "click" in. I don't know if it can even remain attached to the wire during the entire swap as the only way to reattach is pushing it in (rather than "pulling" it back into place.)

<http://www.corvetteforum.com/forums/c5-tech/1826359-headlight-switch-failed-decided-to-repair-instead-of-replace.html>
[\[http://www.corvetteforum.com/forums/c5-tech/1826359-headlight-switch-failed-decided-to-repair-instead-of-replace.html\]](http://www.corvetteforum.com/forums/c5-tech/1826359-headlight-switch-failed-decided-to-repair-instead-of-replace.html)

(Taken without permission for archiving purposes. Edited for format not content.)

Posted 9th April 2015 by Unknown

 6 View comments



Anonymous [May 20, 2016 at 9:22 AM](#)

Excellent write-up!! Did this last night on my 2000 C5 and you saved me big \$\$\$.

Comment (Headlight Switch Removal / Step #7):

I didn't have a Torx socket, so I used a 4mm. Since it was only going into plastic, it came out easy.

I can't understand the high labor charges I'm seeing in blogs. This was my first go-around and I did it in under 3 hours. If I was only swapping the switch, it would have taken half that. An experienced interior tech could do the job in 30 min. What kind of shop charges \$1000/hour?!?! (\$200 parts + \$500 labor) Must be the Corvette tax.

[Reply](#)



Anonymous [August 23, 2017 at 1:34 PM](#)

Thank you for this documentation. It actually just saved me a lot of money. One thing you should add is the Torx driver key (T8) as a required tool to take apart the switch.

[Reply](#)



Anonymous [February 22, 2018 at 9:27 PM](#)

hey hii. you wrote an amazing blog,seems like you have great knowledge about headlights.do suggest me one thing I have BMW 510 series and I have decided to change the [driver module](#) . What will you,suggest should I change the driver module or not?

[Reply](#)



Anonymous [August 20, 2019 at 6:59 AM](#)

Just did it today, only because I needed the dash lights as every morning it's just a little darker. I only dropped the bottom steering column housing and flipped the top one out of the way but left the rubber boot connected. Left all the wiring intact and still was easy. Only problem I ran into is a spring went flying out when I separated the units. Great write up, thanks for doing the exploratory work, saved me a couple hundred at least for now!

[Reply](#)



Anonymous [August 5, 2020 at 11:03 AM](#)

Thank you so much this just saved me at least a couple hundred for a new switch

[Reply](#)



Anonymous [August 19, 2021 at 12:53 PM](#)

HELP i took it apart and a pin with a spring fell out of and i cant find where it goes please help?

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