

## Technical Committee – November 2007

Okay all you C5 drivers, time to listen up. This generation of Corvettes, like its predecessors, always has had a few glitches that persist throughout the production series. Unfortunately, once any such problem is identified, Chevrolet does not always redesign a new part, re-route wires or fluid lines or do other engineering fixes to correct such issues in subsequent years. Often just let the problem fester and fix any problem the customer may have with the same part that came off the factory floor. It was this way for quite a while until an NTSB recall forced them to install a new electrical wiring harness to correct the steering wheel lock-up problem with the C5. Those with C6 coupes can attest to this initial philosophy with the top delamination issue.

So what happens when there is no recall? What does the owner do if they have a problem that is well known in Corvette circles, and they certain it will happen to them because the same basic part is used throughout the generation. Well, if you haven't had it yet, get ready to experience the "seat-rocking" issue with the power seats on a C5. Unfortunately, this problem is not the subject of any official recall. It can happen to either seat, driver's or passenger's, at any time. However, the problem generally occurs to driver's seat because they're used more often and especially if you have the easy exit option programmed on the DIC. And here's another item of bad news: Guess when this usually manifests itself. Great, you're learning – after the 3/36 warranty expires. Again, I have not run into any C5 owner who has seen this issue before their warranty ran out.

To be totally accurate, the seat does not actually "rock" like a rocking chair during this malfunction. What the driver notices is that the seat slides back and forth a bit during acceleration and deceleration. One can actually "rock" the seat to and fro manually while just sitting in it. So, how much, you ask. Well enough to be really annoying. Just ask anyone who has ever had this problem. However, I have never heard of anyone who has successfully argued that it is a safety hazard while operating the vehicle. If they were able to do so, a recall would probably be in order. Nevertheless, you paid \$50,000 for your flagship Chevy and you certainly think this sort of behavior belongs on KIAs, not Corvettes.

The only approved fix is to replace the entire seat adjusting mechanism. Chevrolet has no parts to fix the internal mechanism of the seat rails. Fixing this problem can set you back a pretty penny. Let me use the real-world example of my 2000 Coupe. Disregard the actual gripe on this form. I'm using this to make the point about cost.

<b>LABOR &amp; PARTS</b>				<b>189.20</b>
J# 1	64CVZ25C	SEAT ADJUSTER L/S	TECH(S):8714	
		C/S DRIVER SEAT INOP INTERM WILL NOT ADJUST AND WILL NOT		
		GO UPWARD AT REAR AREA -ADV		
		DRIVER SEAT ADJUSTER MOTOR OPEN INTRENALY		
		<b>REPLACE DRIVER SEAT AJUSTER</b>		
<b>PARTS</b>				
JOB # 1	1	88953529	ADJUSTER 11.561	762.63
			JOB # 1 TOTAL PARTS	762.63
			JOB # 1 TOTAL LABOR & PARTS	<b>951.83</b>

Increase these prices a bit for inflation, add sales tax and even after your Gibbs discount, you'll note that this will set you back a little more than the cost a few DAD's.

When I first became aware of the seat-rocking problem, I was told by some mechanics that the threads on the nut that ran along the screw drive rail became distorted. The rocking was supposedly due to the play between the nut and screw threads. Recently, however, Phil Hambrecht brought an article to my attention that may drastically change the outlook on this problem. The author of this Internet article claims that the rubber insulator, which surrounds the nut, wears or becomes soft. So, the seat rocks because the insulator surrounding the nut does not keep the adjuster block steady on the adjuster drive screw. I must be very clear here: **What follows is not an approved Chevrolet fix.** So, there's the standard disclaimer: **Do this at your own risk.** Also, I have no proof that the problem is actually caused by the rubber insulator as claimed by the author. It could be the nut threads after all. However, the author has claimed success and you can e-mail him to inquire about his claims. The cost for the repair is 60 cents per rail, or a \$1.20 per seat, not including labor. You heard me right, a little over a buck per seat!

So, what's the fix? First, one must remove the seat from the car taking care not to scratch the paint or interior trim. Then you must remove the adjuster and disassemble both seat rails. One then removes the worn rubber insulator surrounding the nut. Two nylon washers, which can be obtained at Ace Hardware, replace the rubber insulator on both sides. The washers' edges must be shaved a bit to fit correctly on the shaft. Then the other rail is done, the adjuster reassembled and the seat placed back in the vehicle.

Here are some problem areas I see with this fix:

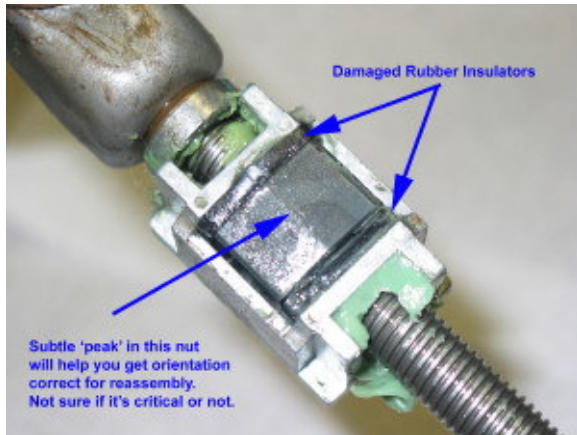
1. This may not work. There is scant evidence that many folks have done this and it solves the problem. But, if you try this and the washers don't work, you're only out a few bucks, plus your time. On the other hand, look at the potential savings!
2. The author rates this as a 2 out of 5 on the scale of mechanical knowledge and skill required where 1 is easy and 5 is hard. Well, I rate it as a 3 for those of you who have absolutely no mechanical know-how because there are a few tricky steps in getting the seat adjuster apart. You will definitely need a helper to at least get the seat in and out of the car.
3. This will take you some time. The author claims a few hours or so with help. My estimate is all day.
4. Don't even think of taking this to Gibbs and have them do it. With the GM lawyers breathing down their necks, I doubt you'll get more than a laugh when you ask them to do it this way.

Now, here's the good news. This problem has actually happened to one of the members in our club who is a mechanic. I have personally spoken to both him and another professional mechanic we have. They have graciously volunteered to assist anyone who might attempt this fix on their car. I am hoping they will gain a good working knowledge about this fix when they practice on the '99 'Vette with the problem.

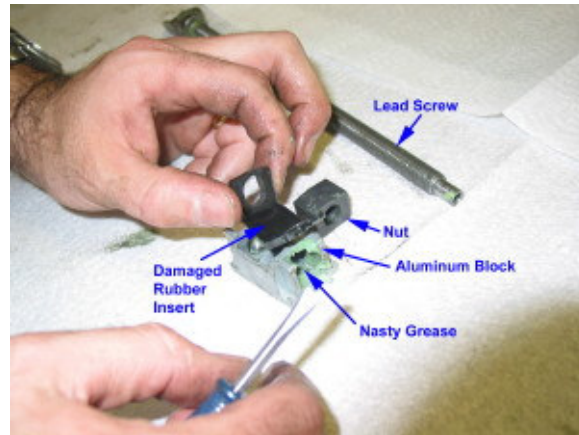
Below are some photos to show you the basics of the problem and the fix. I can give you electronic files that you can put on your computer and then print out the entire document. There is also a web site address you can visit directly. However, there is no guarantee the author will maintain this article on his site indefinitely.

<http://www.lieblweb.com/TechLinks/CorvetteSeatFix/C5SeatFix.htm> . For any C5 owner who thinks they'll be keeping their car a while, this is something you might want to have.

Here's the nut, rubber insulator and adjuster block on the screw drive



Here is the rubber insulator being removed from the block.



Here is one of the nylon washers that will surround the nut instead of the insulator

