

Corvette Body & Paint Repair Basics

by Tom Ichniowski
Corvette Corvette Club of USA
The Corvette Community Training & News-Sharing Platform
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This article goes into detail on the body repair process, including procedures to produce high-quality results. Although it is very general, I thought that there are a few common mistakes that you may not know, and correct body techniques for auto-repairing body issues. Different cars have different body structures, different problems can be done in different ways, and I may get some disagreement on the specifics of this article. This article will provide you with a general overview and concepts, and any personal techniques for auto-repairing different issues.

General Vette Info

Two different construction techniques have been used in construction of Corvette body panels over the years. When the "Coke" made its debut, the early "RSC" body used a steel substructure. The original "Coke" body was a conventional method that would be used to make lightweight panels with correct and design features that would not be easily duplicated or changed later. The body construction used was that of a straight cross-member panel on a steel sub-structure, a "chassis" was used to form straight panels and other body parts that were then riveted and joined or grouted in various "joints" located on the body parts. The technique was used through the 1980 model year.

1981 was a unique transition year in body repairs. The important one added to the "Coke" was a component that allowed it to accept all major engine sizes from 300 to 350 and was the addition of a steel body panel construction. "General Motors Corporation" or GM, made some changes and light up to a different construction using more panels and less steel. This panel type is used on all of our C3 "Coke" and generally on the general-market GM.

The composite materials on all "Coke" repairs are all specific techniques and materials. Fixing a "Coke" that is bent can be done (depending on the body panel) using composite techniques based on the body and where damage occurs. You can find out more (depending on the RSC or RMC) panels. The most important one used is the "Coke" (C3) body.

Tools required

Body repair can be done in a professional body shop or your garage and requires skills. All composite techniques can be performed without the use of air tools, and you will often get better results than in the shop (depending on the work). You will, however, need a clean job, and you'll need a good environment to be done in.

Hand Tools Needed

File Board

A file board with a file on all 12" x 12" long backing board with handles that connects long strips of multiple cutting file sheets. The length and thickness of the board allows you to make a perfectly straight, straight edge and smooth. It's the most important tool you'll have in the shop and it's the most important tool you'll have. The most common file is a double-end file, and requires use of body (hand) techniques. I personally prefer the old type double-end with metal edges (depending on the work) that allow you to get better work than in a professional shop. General-market file board with edge thickness 1/2", they are available in all body and paint shops. The long ones, which I highly recommend are 12" long and 1-1/2" wide.

Handing Wire

An offset or "eye" file board, you'll need a good, extra-long, hand. There are, however, that other hand is about 12" thick, and comes 1-1/2" wide by 12" long. There are also other types of hand in

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S Ben Porath

A decorative graphic element consisting of a light blue horizontal bar with a rounded right end, and a red circular glow behind it.

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