

**NCRS Report – February 2022**  
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**IDENTIFYING 1953-82 CORVETTE SHOCK ABSORBERS**

Joe Tripoli authored a great article recently in the *Driveline* that discussed C1-C3 Shock Absorbers. I thought this would be a good piece of information to pass along! I have paraphrased it below. I am going through a “shock search” myself right now and this was especially helpful for me. There is a great table (matrix) that has part numbers, colors and style that I will have on the CMCS NCRS page for your information as well.

I am always looking for Corvette shock absorbers at swap meets and flea markets. The problem is that there are lots of shocks on display, but they could fit anything. I decided to research Corvette shocks so I could identify them at swap meets. It should be noted the C1 shocks are especially hard to come by, even at Corvettes at Carlisle. If you come across a spiral shock, even though it is not Corvette, you might want to get it. The problem with other models is the collapsed- and extended-length dimensions. But if they are close to Corvette, I would grab them. Although Corvette shocks are date coded and part numbered, it is very difficult to read these numbers when installed on the car.

The information in the matrix was gleaned from Nolan Adams's books, the NCRS Judging Manuals, various assembly manuals, and GM parts books. All physical information is from original shock absorbers. The first thing to do before buying anything is to do research. The best info on anything Corvette is the NCRS Judging Manual for the particular year. I found only one article on shock absorbers in The NCRS Restorer. It is "Development of the 1956-1962 Corvette Heavy-Duty Shock" by Dave Bartush in Volume 14, Number 4, Spring 1988. Some general rules of thumb:

1. All Corvette shocks are Delco.
2. They will be stamped in some way with either
  - Delco Products, Dayton Ohio USA
  - Pliacell
  - GM part number
  - Date
3. See the appropriate year NCRS judging manual for correct dating format
4. Only 1953-58 shocks are spiral; thereafter, they are smooth bodied.
5. They were painted black in 1953-63, gray in 1964-76, and back to black for 1977-82

You can buy replacement shocks from Zip Products and other Corvette parts suppliers. There are also individual NCRS members, like Dan Patch, who advertise NOS Delco shocks in The Driveline (the NCRS Classifieds). Dan's website is <https://dansshocks.com/corvette-shocks/>

The conclusion of this article is that you can find Delco shocks out there. They may not be Corvette, but they might be close dimensionally and could be modified to work, especially spiral shocks for 1953-58 and when these front shocks are installed, it is impossible to read the numbers due to obstruction by the front coil springs. The rears are easier to read. But just the fact that spiral shocks are on the car is impressive.

Joe can be reached with any questions at [joetripolijr@gmail.com](mailto:joetripolijr@gmail.com) or call 610-360-7436. NCRS members always are wonderful about sharing information! Just ask – and join today! NCRS.org