



MIKES CORVETTE CORNER

Headlights/Night Vision:

If you drive a lot at night or even go on those occasional trips when the sun goes down before you get home, let me offer some tips that may make that nighttime commute a bit easier. Its important to remember that driving at night presents different challenges than driving during the day. Traffic fatalities are three times greater at night. At night, vision is somewhat limited. Drivers lose the advantage of color and contrast that is available during the day and depth perception along with peripheral vision are also diminished.

To improve your driving ability after sunset, we are going to look at improving your current headlights, driving in the fog, and headlight types. There are a number of different designs from each manufacturer and varies with optional equipment. In today's article I will be focusing on three different types of headlights.

Fog Lights:

Anyone who has driven through thick fog knows that switching from low beams to high beams does not change the visibility, it actually makes it worse. This is attributed to your high beams reflecting off the water droplets in the fog glaring right back into your eyes. Traditional high and low beams just can't cut through.

If you are thinking about fog light installation, I have used the PIA and BOSCH brands and found both to be acceptable. Some manufacturers offer them as an accessory kit that matches your wiring harness application along with the required mounting kit.

Halogen Headlights:

Halogen lights are the most popular lights in the market and are found in many vehicles today. These bulbs are very close to an incandescent light in a sense that they use a heated filament to produce light. Halogen lights produce a significant amount of heat. So be very careful when you replace them. Even a small deposit of skin moisture can affect their performance.

Xenon Headlights/High Intensity Discharge (Newer Corvettes)

The high intensity discharge lighting system operates at a very high voltage. They produce a brighter light than the halogen and produce far less heat. There have been issues reported that the blue/white light has been known to blind other drivers. But they do meet federal requirements according to SAE. (Society of Automotive Engineers)

These headlights require a lot of energy at start up to produce their first burst of light. But once operational, they require much less energy to maintain constant illumination. These lights have a very long life span and emit little heat, but they are more costly to replace.

Aftermarket Lighting:

There are many types and brands of driving lights for your Corvette, even the older Corvettes can be updated to a halogen or fog light for improved visibility with the exception of the 6 volt Corvettes. But I'm sure someone has something for those types as well. Don't skimp when updating to a performance bulb, use a quality bulb like Sylvania, BOSCH, etc. Some bulbs produced in Asia do not meet many OE specifications, that's why they are relatively cheaper than the ones I have listed.

Sylvania/BOSCH upgrade:

Recent studies have shown that both of these aftermarket replacement bulbs offer a brighter and whiter light, especially the Sylvania SilverStar High Performance bulb. This bulb gives you more down road, side road and a whiter light giving the driver more clarity, and visibility. In some cases these bulbs increase visibility by 40 % on an open road and up to 45% wider on the side of the road. This is also beneficial when approaching street signs. So if you want to upgrade your current lighting system, go online or to a reputable auto supply and check their current offerings.

On an additional note, an eye doctor informed me that there are eye glasses that may help you see better on the road at night. Anti reflective coatings on lenses can cut down on glare from on coming traffic to a high degree. In addition, they have developed lenses with wavefront technology that can reduce halos, starbursts, glare and other light distractions.

Mike