

Wide Angle (Convex) Passenger Side Door Mirror Upgrade

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This article explains how to replace the car's flat mirror in the passenger outside mirror assembly with a modern wide-angle mirror to improve the field of vision and enhance driver awareness of traffic. When new, the Corvair passenger outside mirror was an option. If your Corvair does not have a passenger outside mirror assembly, then it can be added. Installing a passenger side mirror assembly is briefly mentioned herein.

NOTE: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) regulations have been revised to allow the use of the convex (wide angle) mirrors for the passenger door outside mirror. The convex mirror must be labeled indicating objects are closer than they appear. The driver's door outside primary mirror must be flat, although a secondary convex mirror is allowed if it does not obscure the driver's side primary flat mirror.

OBJECTS IN MIRROR ARE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR - This statement, or similar, is visible on the convex mirror glass. The convex wide angle mirror shows more, but items reflected by the mirror appear smaller. Put another way, objects seem farther away than they are. This needs to be considered when changing lanes.

If your car does not have a passenger outside mirror, refer to "Adding a passenger side mirror" in the following. If your car is equipped with a passenger door outside mirror assembly, then proceed to "Converting the passenger outside mirror to wide angle."

Adding a passenger side mirror - Reproduction outside mirror assemblies are available. The Corvair factory assembly manuals indicate how to install the passenger side mirror on the door.

Installation caution - Verify the mirror assembly position before drilling any mounting holes. Have a helper hold the mirror assembly with the mirror head angled for a proper field of vision from the driver's seat. Next, make sure the mirror will not interfere with opening and closing the passenger door side vent window! To minimize mirror vibrations, a backing plate can be fabricated to install on the inside of the passenger door. The driver's side door was built with a backing plate installed.

Converting the passenger outside mirror assembly to wide angle - The original passenger door outside mirror assembly, and new reproduction passenger side mirror assemblies (based on a review of vendors), all have a flat mirror. This requires replacing the flat mirror glass in the passenger side mirror with a convex mirror glass for a wide-angle view.

Finding a new replacement convex mirror - Fortunately a few enterprising folks found a replacement convex mirror that fits the Corvair passenger door outside mirror. The BURCO passenger side convex mirror part number 3027 fits. The mirror was used on the 1976 -1980 Dodge Aspen (some have stated this mirror was also used on the 1986 Plymouth Horizon). It is available at some auto parts stores, on eBay, or Amazon. NOTE: This mirror is claimed to fit all the Corvair outside mirrors, but has only been confirmed to fit the 1965 and 1966 models.

Removing the flat mirror and installing the convex mirror. An examination of an original factory installed 1966 Corvair outside mirror and a reproduction mirror assembly confirmed they used a removable snap ring to retain the mirror in the chrome plated head unit. Some have reported that the mirror in their assemblies was held in by an adhesive, although this has not been confirmed. Keep in mind different manufacturers make reproduction mirrors that may be not be like the original mirror assembly.

- **Snap ring** - A spring like flat snap ring between the mirror head and mirror glass holds the mirror in place. The snap ring can be carefully removed (DO NOT BEND IT!) to allow removal of the mirror. The replacement BURCO mirror is the same diameter as the flat mirror removed from the Corvair reproduction mirror. See illustration with instructions on next page.
- **Adhesive** - Based on unconfirmed information, the mirror is glued to a plate in the mirror housing. It has been stated by some that they "broke" the mirror into pieces to remove it. Then they glued the new mirror to the mounting plate. Gluing a new convex mirror to the existing flat mirror is not recommended because the new convex mirror's sharp edge may be exposed above the mirror head frame creating the possibility of injury.



1. Find the gap in the flat snap ring (it could be at any position around the mirror).
2. At the gap, gently push mirror back into the head to create a space between the mirror and flat snap ring.
3. Use small needle nose pliers (or similar tool) to grasp the end of the flat snap ring and move it out of the groove. **DO NOT BEND THE FLAT SNAP RING!**
4. Carefully work the snap ring out of the mirror head groove all the way around the mirror glass and remove it. **CAUTION** do not let the mirror glass fall out of the mirror head.
5. Remove the flat mirror and replace with the convex mirror.
6. If the mirror head has an emblem on the back side, orient the emblem to the desired position. Position the mirror so its wording is horizontal to the pavement when the mirror is properly adjusted.
7. Carefully press on the mirror to allow the snap ring to be installed in the mirror head groove. Work the snap ring into the groove around the mirror.