

# Seatbelts for your F.C.

BY BOB SLUSHER, CORSA OREGON

My thanks to Bob Kirkman for his previous CORVAN ANTICS article on three-point seatbelt installation in a Rampside. Several important features from that proposal were incorporated in the following design.

**ASSESS NEEDS:** **COMPACT:** The retractor unit has to be as small as possible to fit behind the seat when in the full back position. For us tall people who must run our seats full back, this is critical. **CHEAP:** To be affordable, these units had to be plentiful at wrecking yards. **STRONG:** Why install something that will fail when you need it? **SIMPLE:** Simple to purchase, simple to fabricated and, most importantly, simple to install.

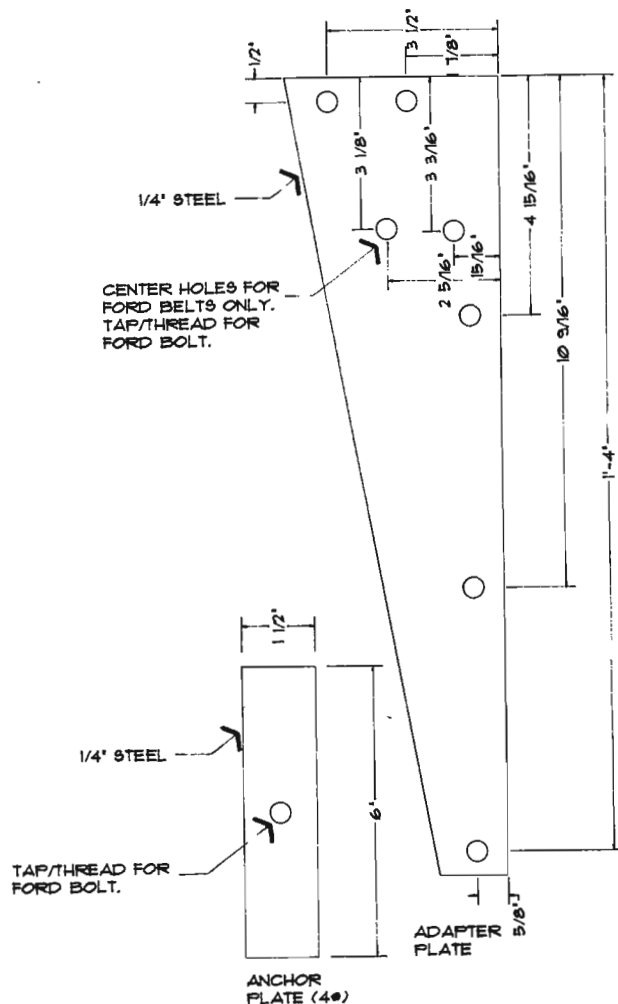
**SOLUTIONS:** Wrecking yards are really entertainment centers for me so the search for the BEST retractor unit was fun. Small size Dodge, Chevy, Toyota, Isuzu, Ford pickups and utility trucks were logical candidates. The clear winner was the Ford belt system from 1986 to ? for small size Ranger pickups and Bronco II utility vehicles. Colors available are red, blue, tan and black. Tan and black were the most difficult to find. \$40-50 for both units, the center passenger belt and all the bolts and hardware seemed about right. These are slick little units with really long belts that allow the wearer to stretch to retrieve an item off the cab floor without coming to the "end of the rope". Again, for us tall folks... a blessing.

**FABRICATION INSTRUCTIONS:** Per plans: I feel  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch plate steel really should be the thinnest material used, especially when one considers how few bolt threads can be cut into that size material. It's your life!

No doubt you're wondering about the "extra hole" (next to the threaded hole) in the center of the adapter plate. Well, the Ford belt-lock relies on a steel bar sticking out the rear of the assembly to prevent rotation of the retractor, especially during a crash. That rod passes through this hole and stabilizes the unit, allowing a small pendulum to swing, which engages the locking mechanism and stops your departure through the windshield.

**INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS:** If you golf or plat chess you will have the patience to install these belts. I believe in simple. SIMPLE IS GOOD! This design is simple and yet, because your life may depend on proper installation, I beg you not to hurry this project. Allocate approximately four hours to complete this project and you will not be rushed.

1. Remove seat
2. Remove and discard five existing 5/16 inch bolts from the side bulkhead as shown.
3. Slice the existing plastic seal covering the side bulkhead hole. The Ford locking bar will pass through here.
4. Using the adapter plate as a pattern, drill  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch hole through the bulkhead using the "extra hole" as a guide. The Ford mounting bolt is long and will pass through here.
5. Install adapter plate with five new 5/16 inch grade 8 bolts with washers as shown. From here on, use all Ford mounting bolts from the host truck.
6. Install retractor assembly and webbing as shown. Install in reverse order of removal from host truck.
7. Measure approximately 38 to 46 inches from the cab floor and drill  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch hole in the upper corner of the rear bulkhead as show. This mounting height will determine where the belt will ride on your shoulder or neck. A test fit is recommended. A good guide is to



drill this hole no higher than your eyeball while sitting.

8. Drill the belt floor mounting holes through the double thickness of metal at the REAR of the factory installed broad metal gusset that is surface welded to the curved steel deck just behind the seat. This will form a right angle to the direction of pull from the belts when in use.

9. Loosely tape or glue each  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch x 6 inch anchor bar to a long rod (minimum 22 inches). Slide or "fish" these anchor bars behind each hollow corner vertical bulkhead until you can intersect it with your shoulder belt anchor bolt. Really very easy!

10. For the seat attachment points, "fish" the anchor through the front wheel well. There is a one-inch space between the fuel tank and the bulkhead under the seat.; that is your target. When in place, you will have to tilt the anchors slightly rearward in order to intersect with your floor mounting bolts. Two persons here is a must! Looks simple, but this one was tough for me.

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PASSENGER SIDE (TYPICAL)

