

Here's the original post:

I ordered the big flex-a-fit radiator with the 3,300 cfm electric fan from ecklers. It says it fits 1973 to 1982. It doesn't!

AT the bottom of the radiator are two pins that go into two grommets in the vette. My car does not have two grommets. I looked at the build diagrams for my car and they look like what I have and not what the radiator instructions call for. When I contacted Flex-a-fit all I got was "well that is what our engineers came up with". It will fit an older model than mine.

Has anyone gone through this installation?

What other caveats am I in for?

Will it even fit if I spend hours modifying things?

After several hours I finally got it in! It was like feeling around in the dark to try and figure it out. Therefore there are no step-by-step photos. I did not ever know if what I did was how it was going to end up.

Ok here's how it came down.

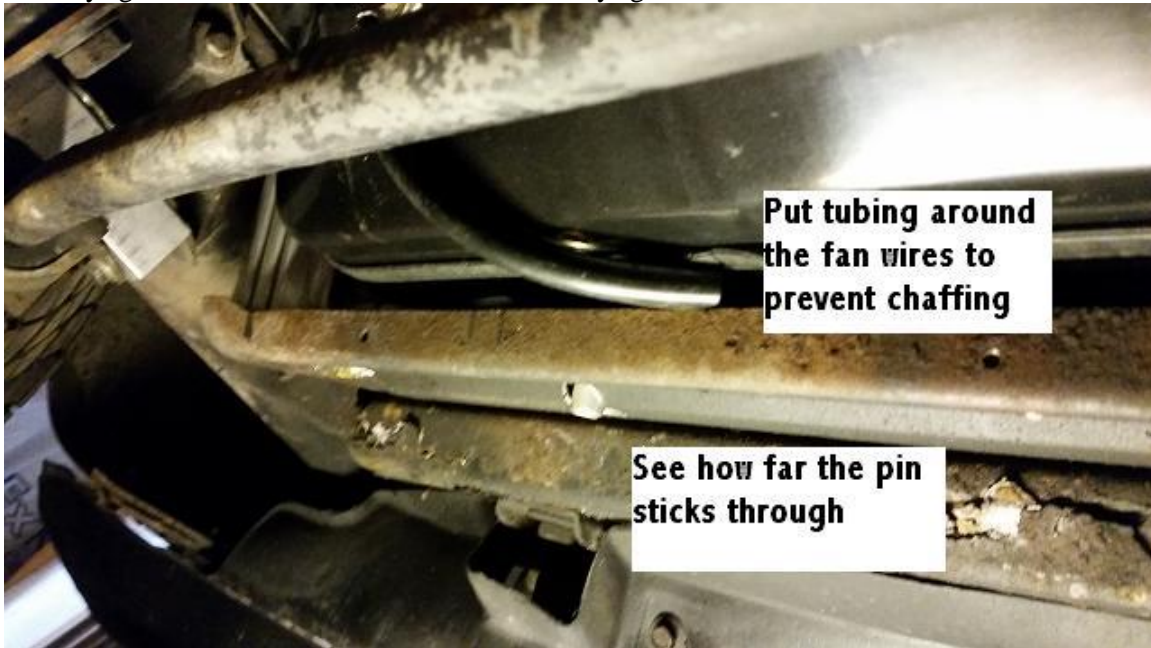
The new radiator is 3 inches narrower left to right and twice as thick front to back. When I drained the old one I captured about 5 quarts of liquid. After I got the hoses hooked up and I filled the new one with just water it took 8 quarts. This is good.

If this is put in an older C3 the instructions should be good but in a newer C3 there are problems.

First there are pins on the bottom of the radiator that fit into the same grommets that the old radiator fit into. There are no grommets on a newer Vette so I needed to drill holes into the lower support pan to allow the pins to go through. I could have cut off the pins but I decided to keep them and put them into holes so the bottom of the radiator would not move around.



I used a step drill to drill a small hole to check my position before cutting a bigger hole. Once I cut the bigger hole and realized I was off one way or the other, I used the step drill bit as a sideways grinder. It's a vicious tool! Cuts sideways great.



Put tubing around the fan wires to prevent chaffing

See how far the pin sticks through



It was very difficult for me to determine where to start the hole



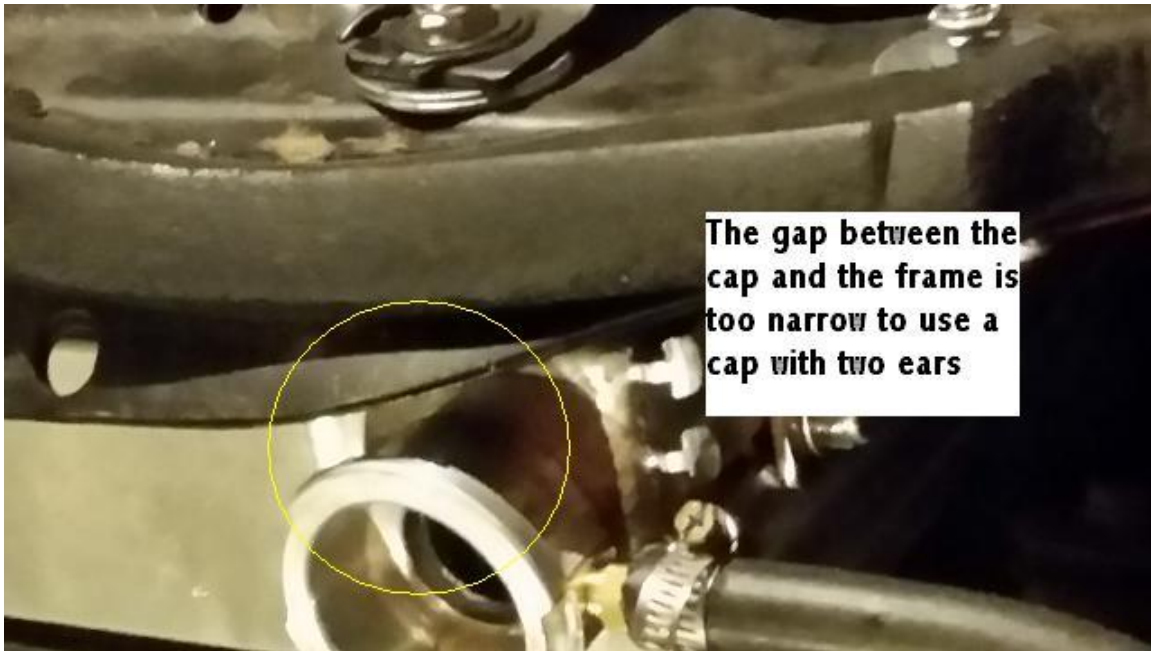
I found a lot of rust as soon as I pulled the old rad. I decided to use the old radiator support to install the new radiator and learn how to do it with the old one. Then put a new one in later after I've made all my mistakes. The rust doesn't seem to hurt the needed mechanical strength for now.

The pins stick through about 1/2 inch which seems to be plenty.

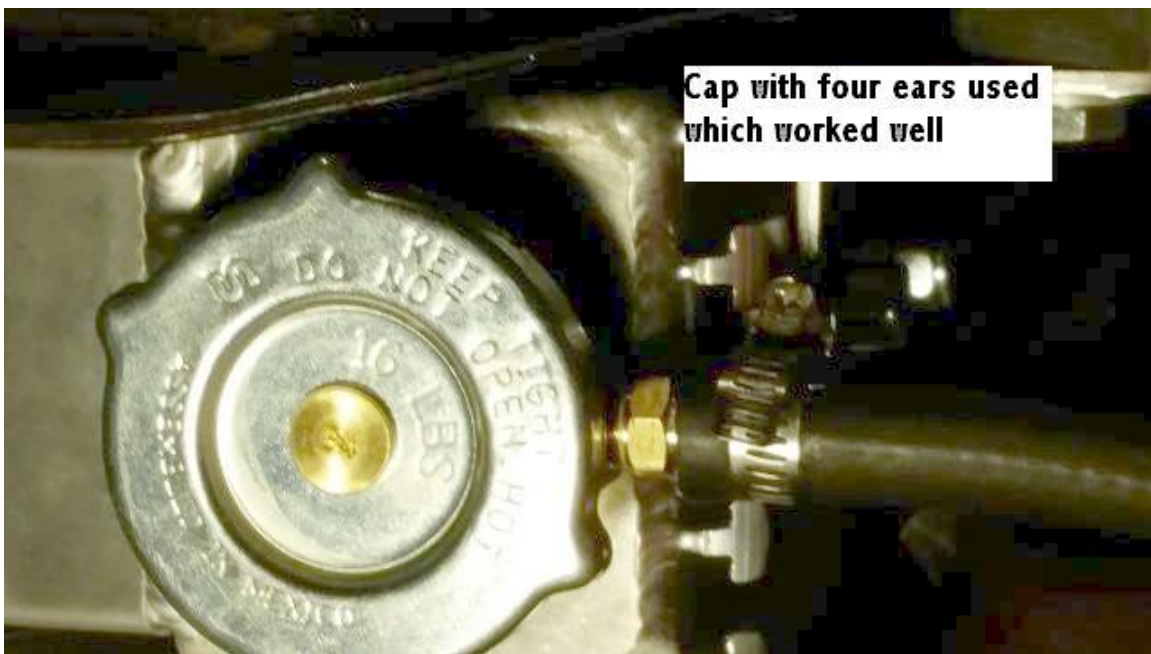
I used the old lower radiator rubber seats on the new rad. They keep the radiator from sitting directly on the lower metal shelf. I had to cut the rubber to make a bigger slot for the new radiator to fit into. I used a coping saw with the pieces tightened down in a vice and it worked great.

They send spacers to put between the sway bar and the frame to lower the sway bar. I put the blocks in but after the radiator was in its final resting place, I wasn't sure they were needed. It's a real pain to get them in there because when you move the sway bar lower, the bolt holes don't line up. You have to push things around and try to hold them in place while trying to hit the hole. No fun! Requires three hands.





The gap between the cap and the frame is too narrow to use a cap with two ears



Cap with four ears used which worked well

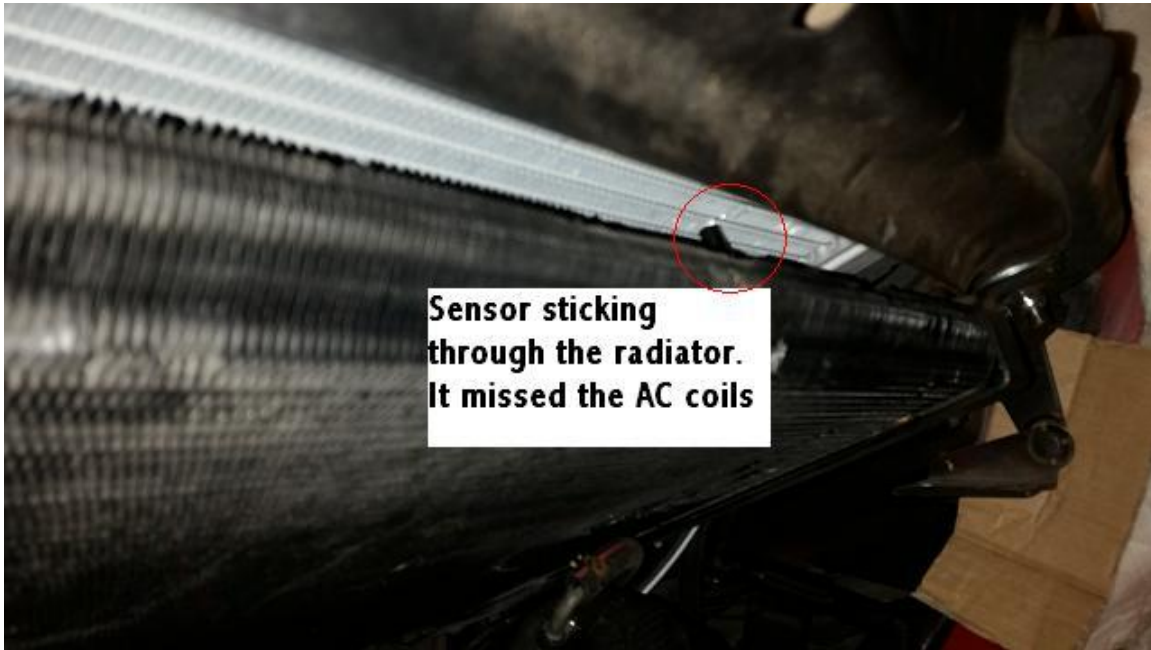
If the bottom was raised about ½ inch a cap with two ears would fit. But to raise the bottom a thicker rubber seat would need to be used and the depth of the pins in the holes at the bottom would need to be considered. As it is the forward ear on the cap hits the support before the cap is fully closed. The instructions called for using a supplied rubber cushion between the radiator and the support, one support at the top and one at the bottom. The bottom did not need the cushion as it did not contact anything so I used both of them at the top to space the top away from the support a little more. Otherwise I'm not sure that any cap would have fit there.

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The old upper supports for the old radiator used two holes on each side. The AC coils were held in place by one of the bolts. The new radiator cannot use those supports so the AC coil is no longer held in place. I had to use a new bolt and self locking nut to hold the upper AC coil in place. But the bolt has to come in from the radiator side and the nut on the AC coil side to give maximum clearance between the bolt and the new rad. This was another reason to stack the two cushions at the top of the new radiator to space it back away from the support a little more.

In the shot above the two bolts coming through a little lower and to the outside of the AC coil hold the new radiator in place. They have a clever, very adjustable, way to secure the radiator to the support.



Another reason to space the new radiator away from the support a little more is the sensor that you shove through the fins in the new rad. With it mounted as I have it there is about a 3/8 inch gap between the tip of the sensor and the AC coils.

I could have shoved it through a little higher and it would have had plenty of room above the AC coils. If I had followed their instructions it would have been higher. I placed it a little lower because I wanted it to be in an area where there would be coolant even if the coolant was a little low. I was afraid that if the coolant got too low the sensor would not sense the temp and the fan would never turn on. The supplied controller has an adjustment to set the trigger point for the fan so I'll just adjust it to match the current position of the sensor.

There are several pieces of foam rubber used in the old radiator that are not used here. I'm going to use them to close the space above the AC coils so that all the air is directed through the AC coils and not around them.



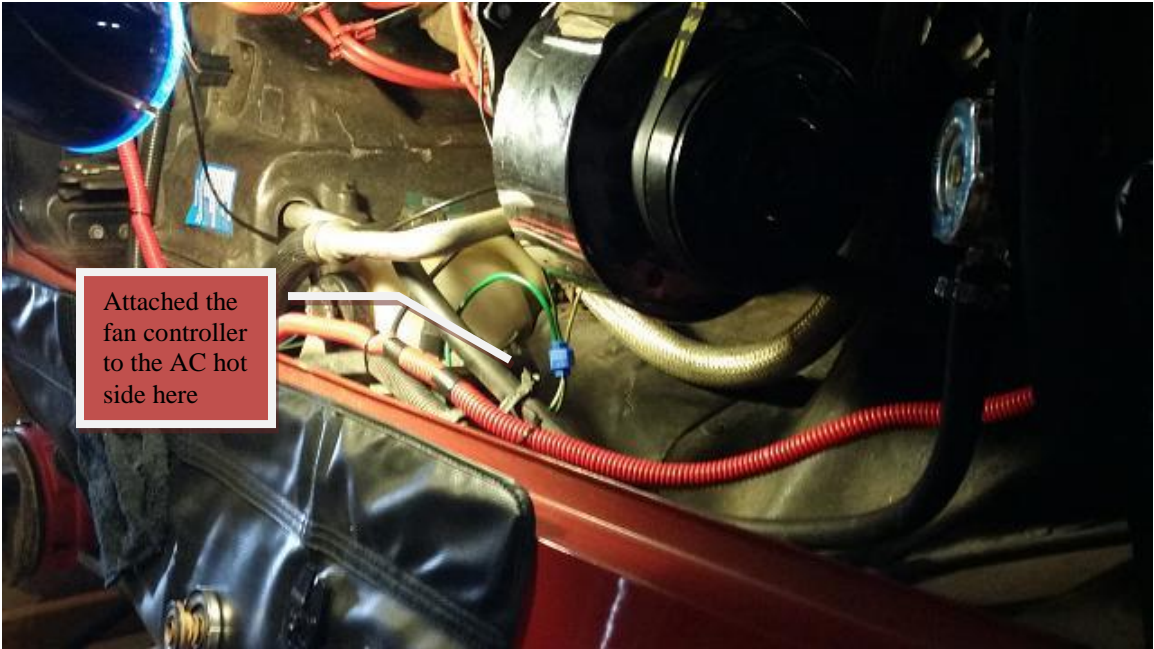
I replaced the upper and lower hoses as the old ones looked pretty bad. The lower hose was a challenge. The stock radiator has a 1 1/2 inch exit pipe while the new one has a 1 3/4 inch pipe. So the stock hose will not fit. A shaped hose is required in that spot. I went to AutoZone and asked for help. We looked at earlier C3 hoses and found that the 70 model had a 1 3/4 exit pipe and the same shape as the 78 hose. Cheeeeeeers! It worked. But because of the position of the upper and lower pipe both hoses required being trimmed about 3 to 4 inches on the radiator side. They fit great after the trim. The numbers seen on the hoses are the Dayco numbers.



They called for the controller to be mounted on the fender well “somewhere”. I could not find a good spot but the new fan had a lot of open territory on the housing. The shot above is the right side and you can see all the space between the fan housing and the belts. The radiator is not centered in the car. I don’t know why. The old one isn’t either. I did not notice this until I had mounted the controller on the left side of the fan housing and put the whole assemble back into the car. The left side is much tighter. It is so tight and cluttered over there I could not get a good picture of it mounted in place. The right side is a better place. I may move it after I put a connector between the controller and the rest of the car.

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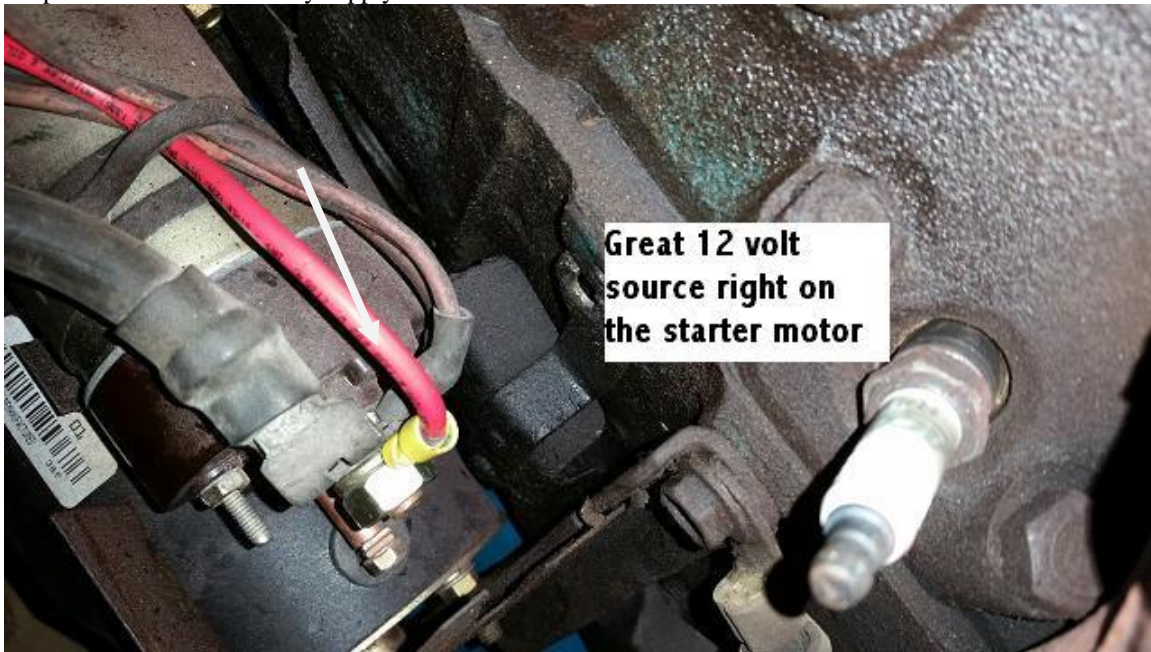
The instructions called for running a 10 gauge wire from the fan controller all the way back to the battery. That really sounded like a pain in the ass. Besides that what was I supposed to connect it to once I got it back there? After I mounted the controller on the wrong side of the fan housing I noticed that all the connections I needed were on the right side of the car. So I bundled up all the wires, secured the bundle to the top of the housing (they provide handy bolt holes in the housing) and ran the bundle over to the right.



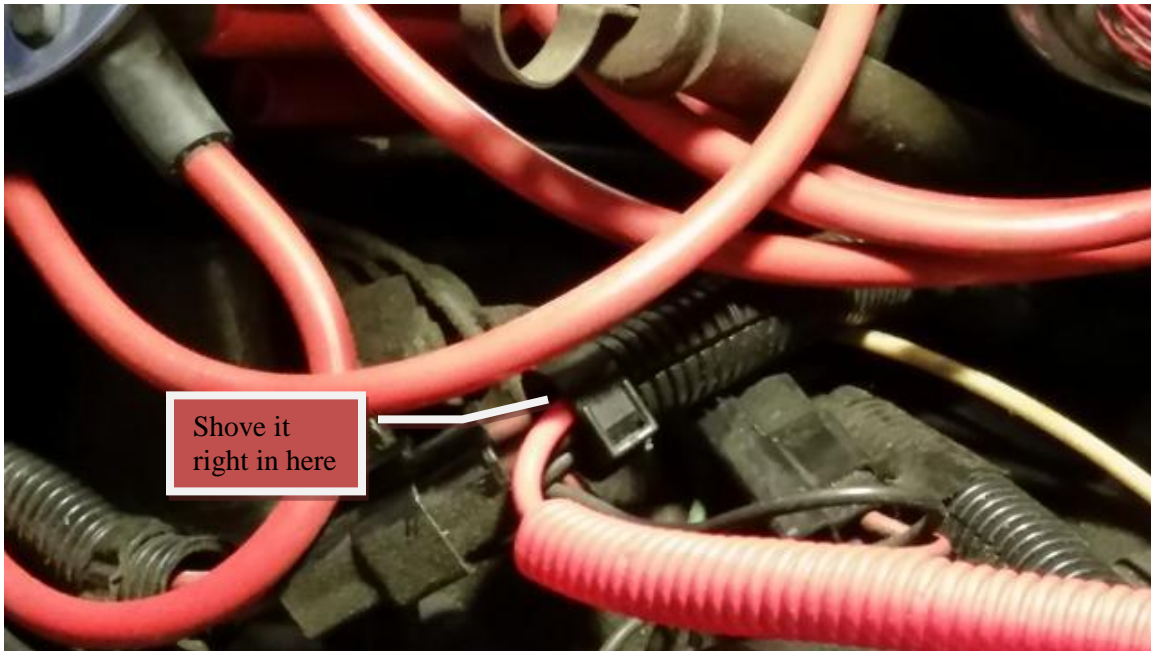
There was a great ground that the AC compressor uses, so I used it also.



The battery cable (as big as your finger) goes straight to the starter. Why would I want to run a 10gauge wire back to the battery when I've got this fantastic connection here at the battery???. The red wire seen in the pic below is the wire they supply for the fan.



There is even a nice cable running down to the starter from the top of the fire wall which I was able to shove the supplied wire into.



Well it does not leak and the fan came on when I turned on the key and engaged the AC compressor clutch. So far so good. I've got to tow the car to the drive way, disconnect the upper hove and flush the engine and new radiator out to the ground. I did notice a bunch of junk in the old hoses that I'm sure is in the engine and I don't want it in my new radiator. Hope this helps someone.