ROCKER PANELS 55,56,57 CHEVY REPLACEMENT

Do not throw away any pieces when you first remove them. There are many supports that are not reproduced and will need to be used again. When disassembling try not to damage any of these supports and brackets. This restoration is performed with the body off the frame. If your Classic Chevy body is still mounted to the frame you will be able to perform this restoration with a few minor changes. To order new inside rockers you will need to ask for Part # 1044 for the right, Part # 1043 for the left; for the outside rockers Part # 1047 for left and 1048 for right. The rockers and floor braces are manufactured by C.A.R.S Inc. and can be purchased from them or your local dealer.

1. This is a 57 Chevy Belair. This rocker replacement process can be used on the 55, 56 and 57 Chevys including: two door hard tops, convertibles, two door sedans, Nomads, station wagons and sedan deliveries. On four door sedans and four door hard tops the outside rockers are longer than the restoration we will perform so just take two new outside rockers and slice the one towards the rear five inches, then weld it to the front section and install it as one unit. If you do not need the complete outside rocker replaced on your four door then just replace the section of the length you need. The inside rockers are the same length on all models (see subsection Partial Rocker Replacement.)

2. This is a close up of a typical area where the rocker is rusted out leaving holes under where the rocker moulding would be..

65 PHOTOS + KEEP IN MIND THAT ALTHOUGH OUR EXAMPLE IS A CLASSIC CHEVY THESE SAME TECHNIQUES WILL WORK FOR ANY AUTOMBILE AS NEARLY ALL VEHICLES ARE MANUFACTURED THE SAME IN THIS AREA.

#3. This is the back side or, the inside rocker. There are also holes here. This is a common problem the inside rocker rusting out first (especially on convertibles) Most often on the convertible the inside rocker and all the floor braces must be taken off too.

4. This is the opposite side of the car. Notice the arrow pointing to a wrinkle where it had been damaged at one time. This complete inside rocker needs to be replaced. More than likely someone used a floor jack to change a tire and placed it on the rocker instead of the frame.

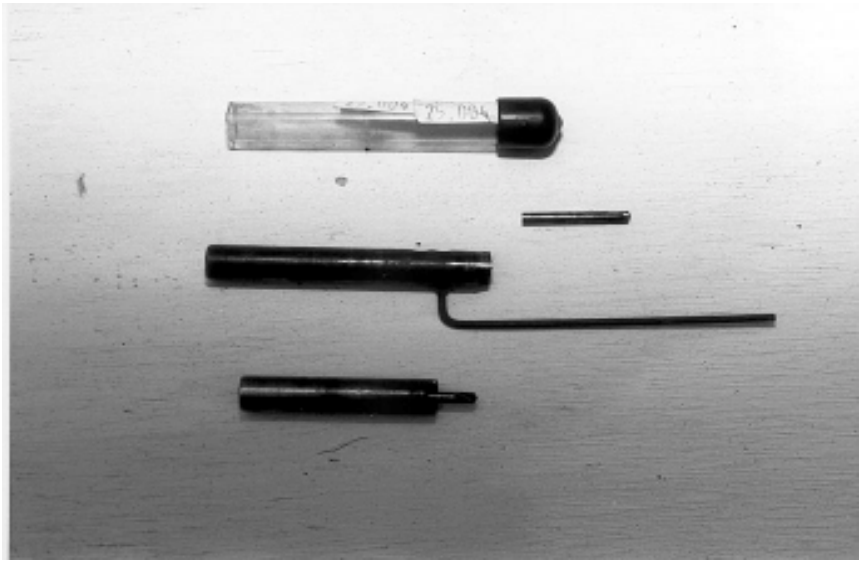
5. Just inside the doors we are pointing to the area where you need to scrape out all the undercoating and body seam sealer.

6. Right under the same groove as mentioned in caption #5 (the rear seat), scrape out the body seam sealer with a putty knife.

7. Before you go farther check that the door gap lines up correctly: a good 3/16 to 1/4 max gap all the way around the bottom of the rocker, the quarter and the fender. (if the gap is not right, make sure you line it up right before you proceed)

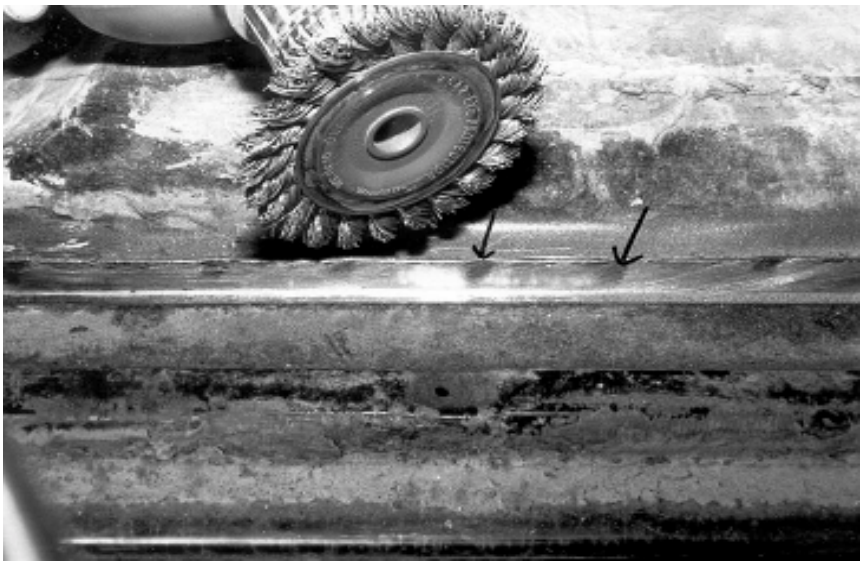
8. Take a drill with a 1/8 drill bit and drill two holes through the door hinges and through the sheet metal of the door. These will be guide pin holes for later. When you have new sheet metal lined up and welded these will help you to put the door back on in the correct alignment.

9. This brace is mounted to the center body mount to keep the body from sagging because we are performing this restoration with the body off the frame . If the body is still on frame you'll be able to perform this restoration but it is much more time efficient when the body has been removed from the frame. This brace can be shimmed to adjust door gap if body sags slightly. Be sure and install two braces one on each side.

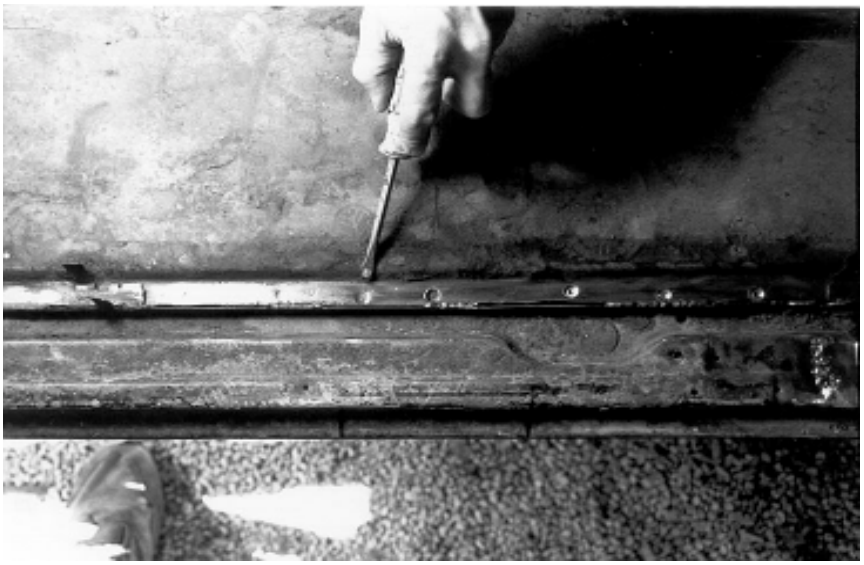


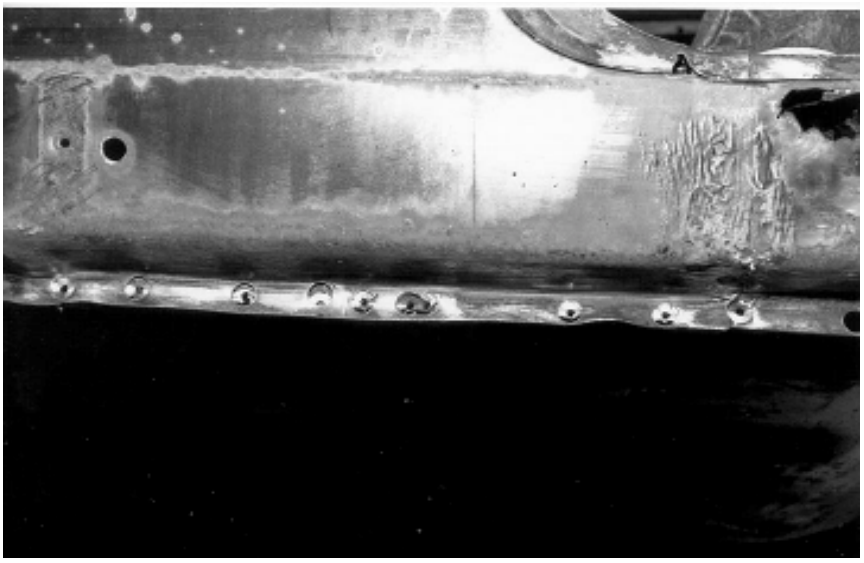
10. This is the Spot Eze tool with replaceable center drills for cutting factory spot welds out. Drill out every weld in areas described. Blair circle or cookie cutter spot weld tools work just as good.

11. Take a Weiller wire brush on a drill and clean out the seam until you see the spot welds. (see arrows in photo) This location is where the step or scuff plate used to be, just inside the car on the floor - where you scraped out coating in captions #5 and #6.



12. In this photo you can see how some of the spot welds have been drilled with the Spot Eze and some have not, so that you know what it should look like. Drill through one layer of steel only. Which will separate the floor panel from the inner rocker top edge.

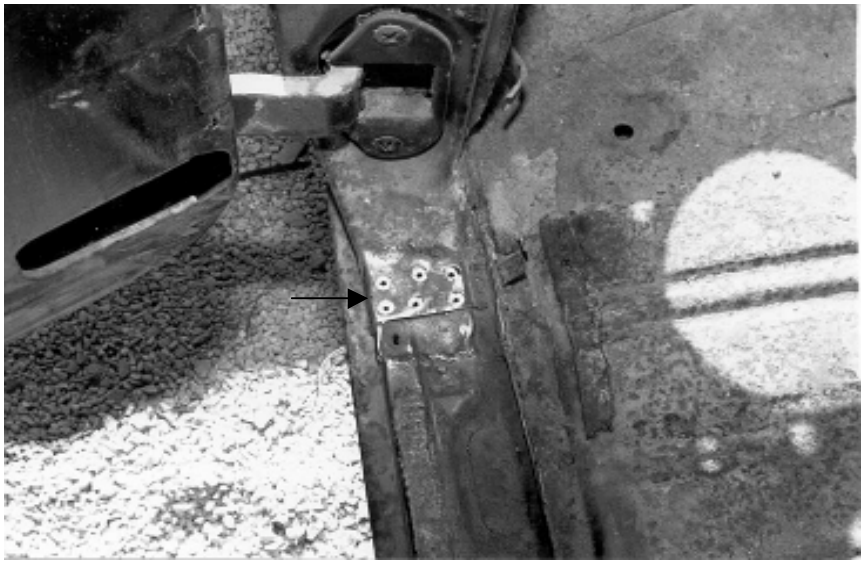




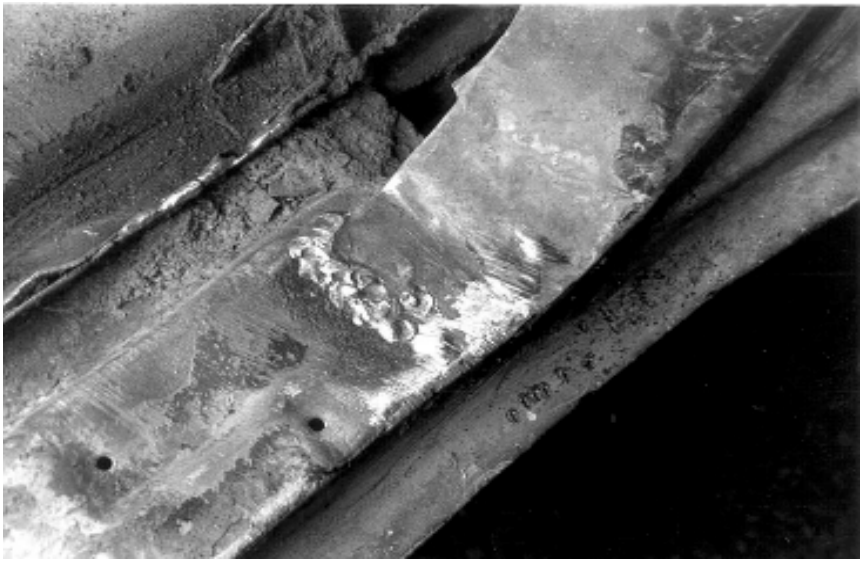
13. The bottom flange where the inside and outside rockers meet below at the lowest point of the rockers (repeat the process of finding spot welds and drilling them out with the SpotEze

Note: Some photos will show going from driver side of car to passenger side. Both need to be replaced identically and they require the same process.

14. Below where the bottom door hinge goes into pillar, spot welds need to be drilled out. (see arrow)



15. At the end of the door just inside of the rocker where the quarter panel starts, there has been some slag weld that was welded on from a previous repair. Normally the spot welds would be in the center of this piece just like the front one. Clean this with the wire brush and drill them out.



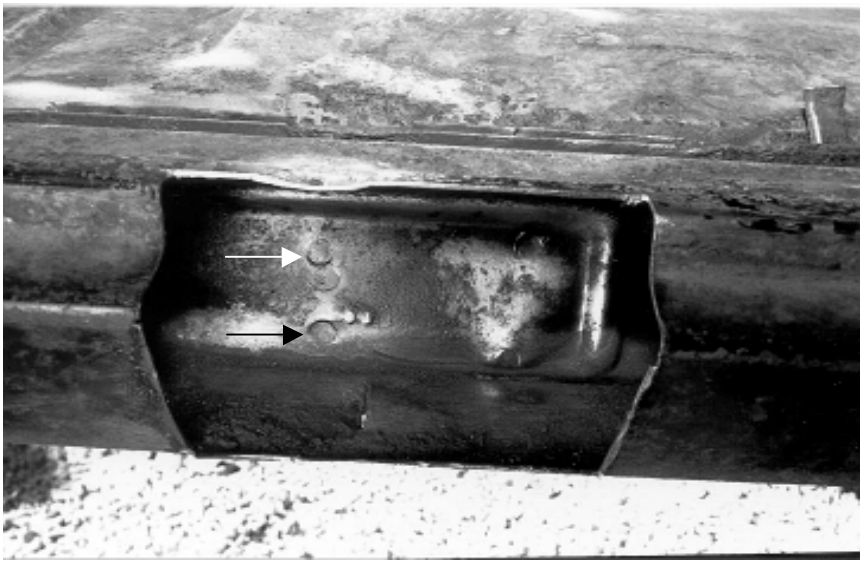
16. Located just below the back of the door is a lead seam. Heat the lead and scrape it with a putty knife. Take the wire brush on a drill and brush the remaining solder out so you can see the seam where the original factory rocker goes inside the edge of the quarter panel.

17. Take the cut off tool and slice the area (top to bottom) at the edge of the rocker as seen in picture. Be careful when you reach the seams where floor and rocker edges meet. Cut only the rocker not the floor. The same goes for front of rocker. Slice it six inches from the end where front fender would go to give yourself room for final trimming.

18. Take a heavy duty flat chisel or putty knife tap it in easily to loosen the panel. Be careful not to bend the edge of floor.

19. Take the putty knife and pull it towards you to loosen it even more.

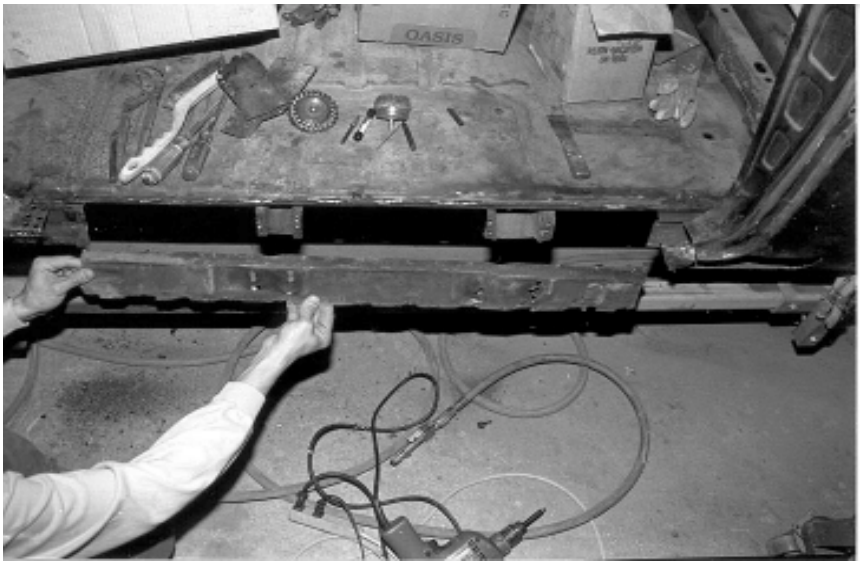
20. Get inside the car. Pull the rocker up and down to loosen and remove rocker. If it still will not come free you may have missed a spot weld somewhere.



21. This is a cut-away of the outer rocker section that has been removed to show you the inner rocker at the floor brace. See the arrows pointing to spot welds inside the rocker. This method of drilling out floor brace welds from the inside rocker will work with either body mounted or not. When the body is mounted to frame it is hard to drill spot welds out from brace side under car. The method we are using will leave only 1/8 holes in floor braces, which can easily be filled up with weld. This will aid in a concours restoration so that panel replacement cannot be detected.

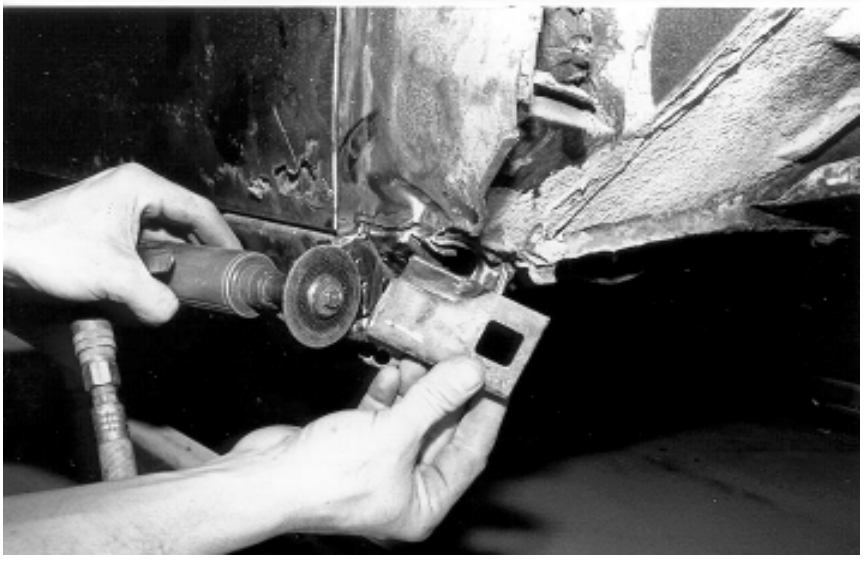
22. This is the same area with the spot welds drilled out. Remember to drill only through the first layer of metal (only the inside rockers and not the brace)

23. Cut each end of the inside rocker and pull it free. Notice the floor braces still in place.



24. Here is the outside rocker panel end piece being pulled free once you cut the spot welds. This piece cannot come out until the center section of outside rocker is removed.

25. At the very front of the rocker remove the Bottom Fender Hold Down Bracket. Cut this right on the stitch weld and remove from car

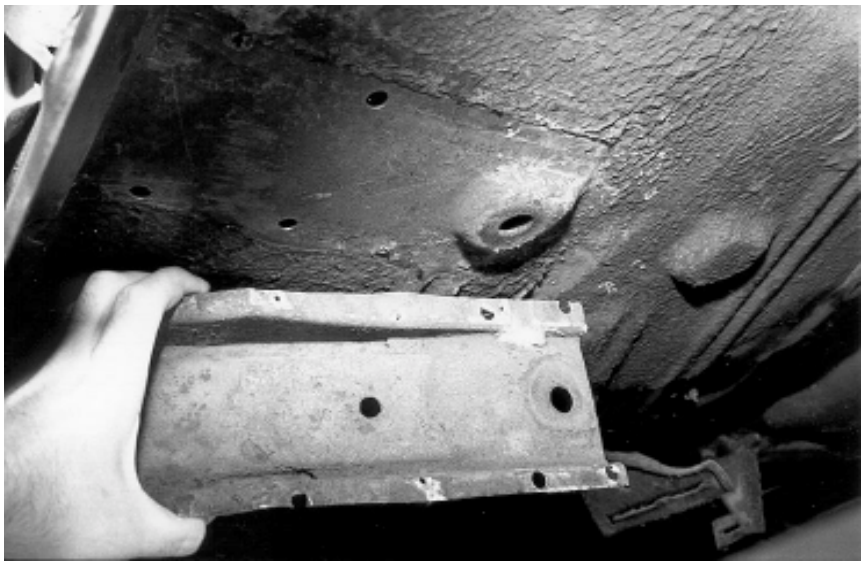


26. Drill all the spot welds and remove the front end piece of rocker (left hand) and inside corner stabilizer piece (right hand) The fender brace bracket and the stabilizer pieces are not reproduced so they need to be sandblasted and kept. Be careful not to bend them up during removal.

27. After you remove the front section there is a plate that rides over the top of the inside rocker, slice this plate with a cut-off wheel, out of the way (keep it.) This is much faster than removing the whole plate which goes up into the car two foot.

28. Inside the car where your feet would rest on the floor in the back seat are where the welds are located that attach the floor brace to the floor. Clean with a wire brush and you will be able to see where to drill. You need to remove this to replace the inside rockers.

29. At this point if your cars body is still mounted to the frame Take a floor jack with a 2X4 and jack up 1/4 inch clearance between brace and frame and remove the brace. This needs to be removed to replace the inside rockers regardless if body is still on frame or not. This is the brace you just drilled out where your feet would go in the back seat.



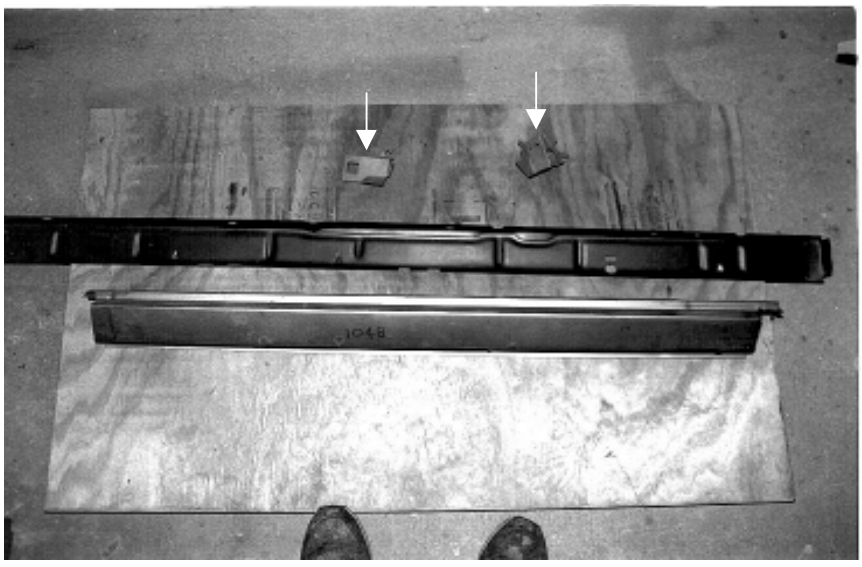
30. If outside quarter panel sheet metal is good do not cut the quarter. Simply remove the inside rocker from behind after drilling out the spot welds where the last brace is connected to inside rocker. (use a short drill that fits between inside rocker and frame preferably an air drill). See arrows pointing to spot welds drilled out on brace side to remove rear section of inside rockers. Depending on your abilities you may need to remove this brace from car. It runs from one side of the car to the other side. To save time, cut a section out: six inches back away from inside rocker to have enough room to release inside rocker. Slice where you see the line running across. As you can see we removed the original inside rocker without cutting this brace.

31. Take a hammer and dolly and straighten up the edges of the floor as best as you can. Use 24 grit grinding disk and grind the metal of the floor up in the inside to give a good contact for welding.

32. Put your door back on the car. Line it up and put in the 1/8 drill bit guide pins. It should line up perfectly.

33. Shut the door and check the gap. If the gap is satisfactory, then proceed. If not, then use a floor jack and 2X4 to support six inches to one foot on rear brace behind where the door and quarter meet. Jack it up to the correct gap, hold it there and then proceed.

34. Here are the inside and outside rockers from C.A.R.S. Inc. Note that the brackets taken from the car are sand blasted and ready to install.

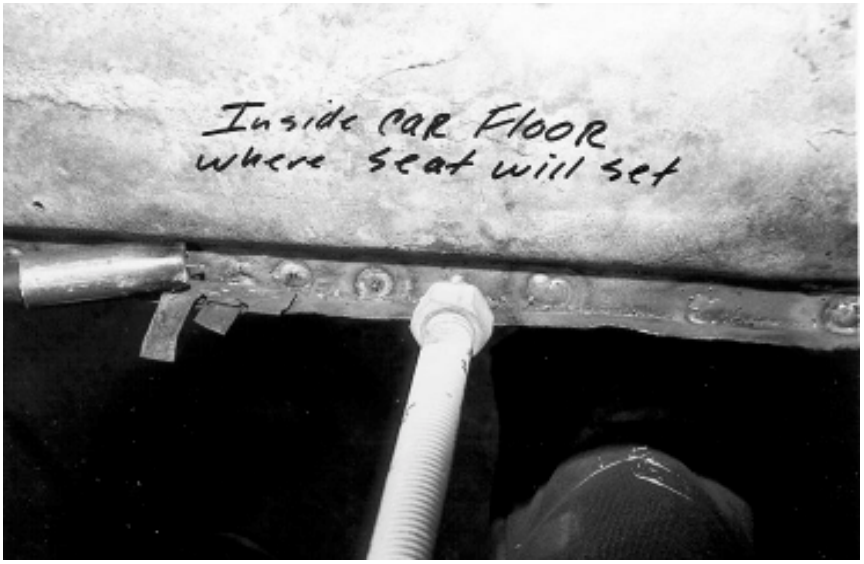


35. Line up the new inside rocker with the original half moon notch that was left from years of rust discoloration. This picture shows where the rear brace meets up with the inside rocker. You need to push it up into place so it fits.

36. The area where you see the circle shows the appropriate fit.

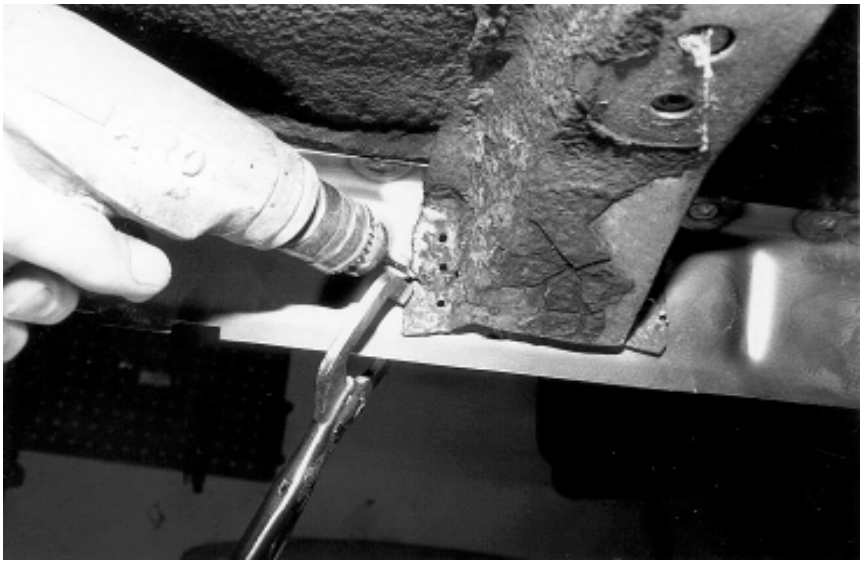
37. Clamp the edge of the brace to the back side of the floor brace for a nice tight fit.

38. Here is a home made panel holder that uses a threaded rod with a pad on top to butt up against your shoulder.

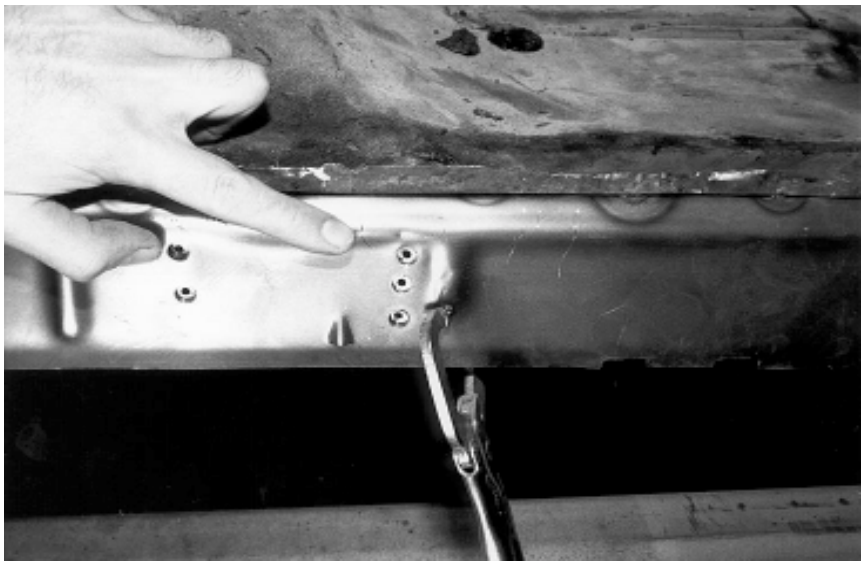


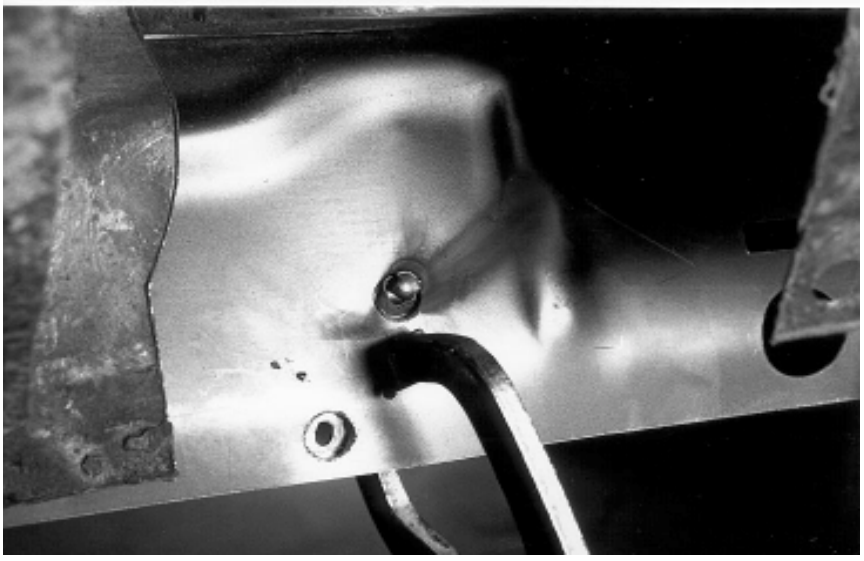
39. Use the panel holder on the floor edge. Start in the center and work your way out toward the front and rear of the car.

40. Next you need to weld the inside rocker to the floor braces while it is still clamped. Drill right through the pilot holes into the other side with a 1/8 drill bit.



41. Now go to the other side of rocker and use the Spot Eze on the pilot holes. Cut through the rocker and stop when you hit the floor brace.





42. Now weld starting at 12 o'clock position going around clock wise till completely welded solid. This will join the rocker and brace.

43. Weld until all solid then move on and complete all remaining braces.

44. Take the floor brace you took off the car and get it into position, use a piece of wood and a bottle jack. Adjust until flush. Weld rocker to brace first.

45. This photo shows the completed welds inside of the brace on the floor.

46. The inside rocker is in place and welded.

47. Take the plate that connects to the bottom support that you cut before in caption # 27. Now place it over the inside rocker in place and
weld it in solid.

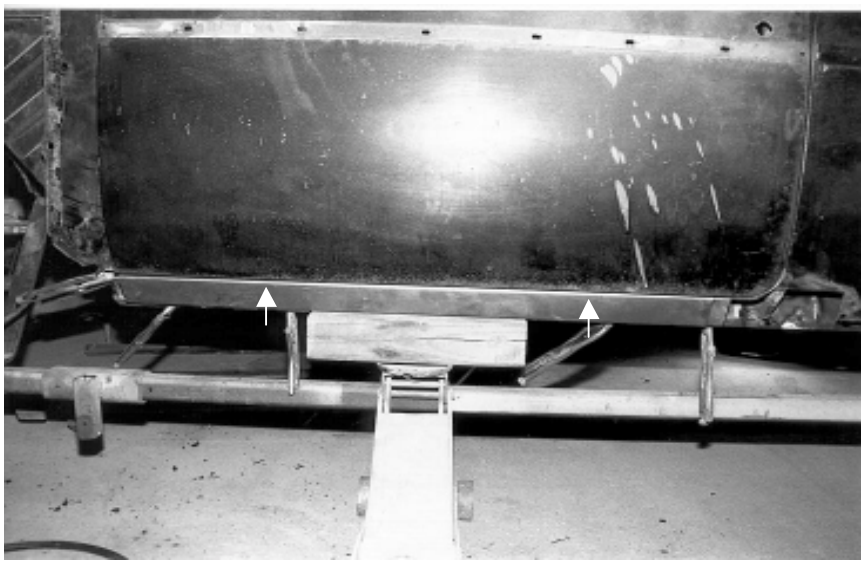
48. Take a flanging tool that has a pneumatic hole puncher and punch-out holes in the bottom rocker to weld the outside rocker to the inside rocker. You can also use your drill and SpotEze and drill out appropriate holes.

49. Now take the outside rocker and go to the top flange that will fit against the floor edge and drill out holes for welding to the floor.

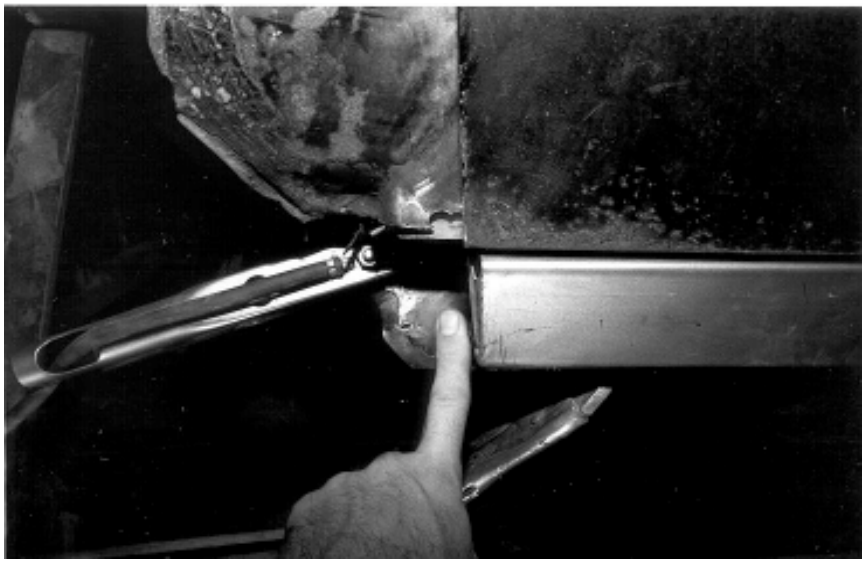
50. Take the outside rocker and lay it down. Take a marker and mark a straight line where you will need a groove to slide it into place. Use a 3/32 cut off wheel and make a groove.

51. Position outside rocker in place. Here you see how it slips back in once you have cut the groove mark in the last step.

52. Check for gap again. If you need to adjust it take a 4X4 and your floor jack and raise it up with pressure until it is all even and the gap suits you. See white arrows.



53. The edge needs to be lined up with the front fender and rocker. (Check that the edge of the door lines up with edge of rocker)



54. Open the door and make sure that the edge below bottom hinge goes up and fits flush, that the rocker makes good contact with the floor where you see the six spot welds. See arrows.

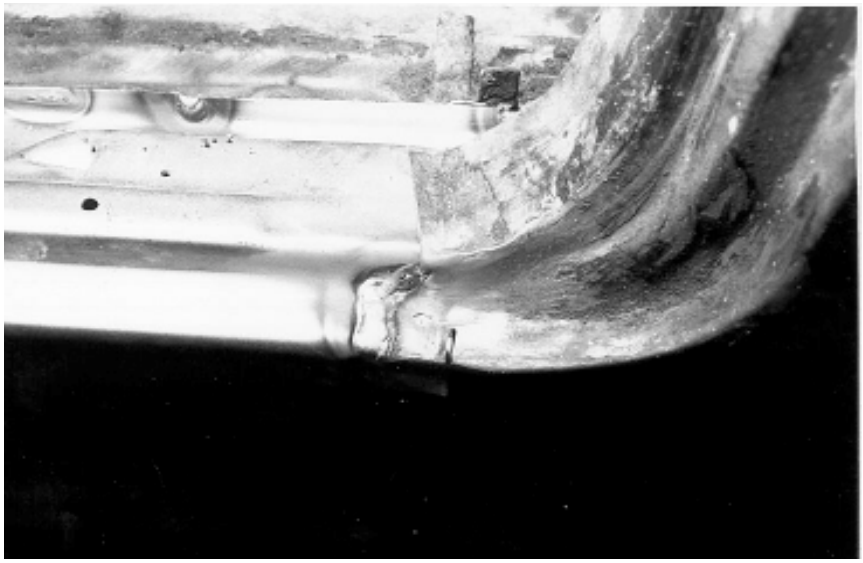
55. Clamp this area down tight and weld the six holes.

56. Another method of doing the bottom edge of the rocker, is to make sure that the two pieces of metal meet up for a good fit. Drill through one panel only and then weld the two together. Use vise grips to clamp the edges together when welding from floor. This photo is from the under-car backside view of the inside rocker.

57. This photo shows the top edges of the floor and rocker, where they mate in place with the door open.

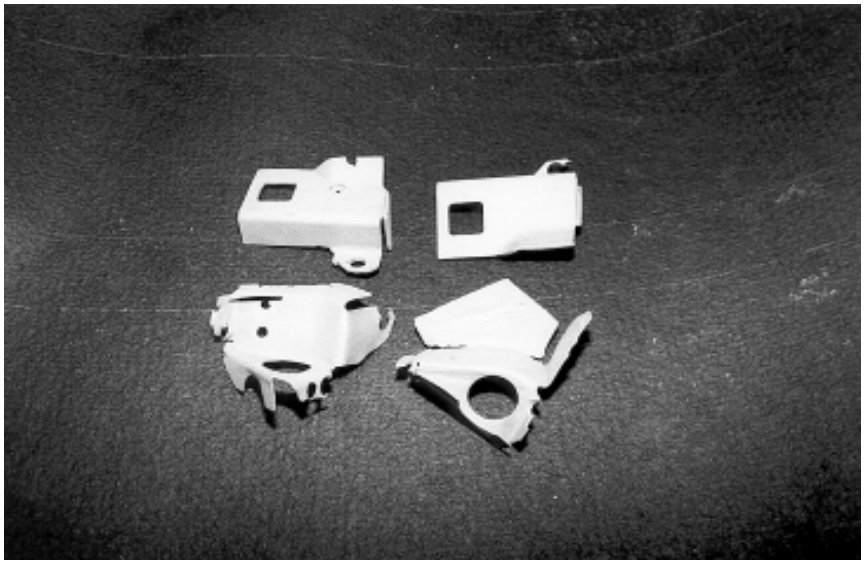
58. Clamp this edge in place with vise grips so you can weld it where the outside rocker meets up with the floor edge. Note the scribe marker, caption #58, that shows you where to start your weld (at the 12 o'clock position). Clamp this spot with grips also before welding.

59. This is where the outside rocker meets the quarter panel. Stitch weld there.



60. You can see here that the welds have been made approximately 2 1/2 inches in between on the underneath rocker.

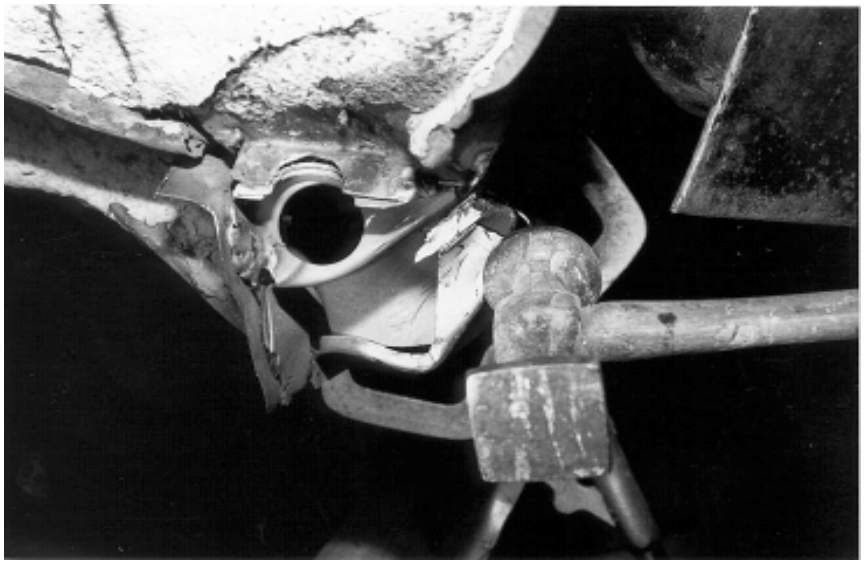
61. These are the fender braces and inside contour braces for both sides of the car. (The lower ones in the pictures go on first.)



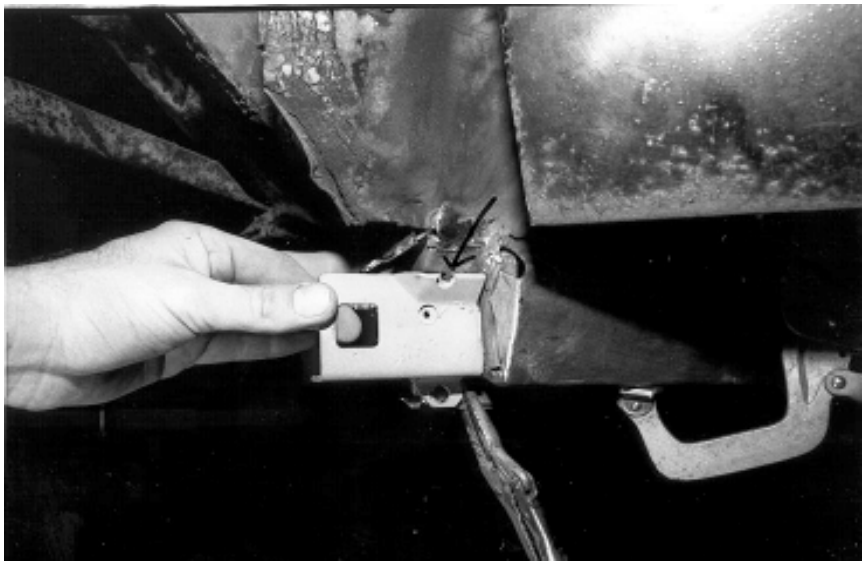
62. Prep the rocker for these braces. Flap it out away from the car toward arrow using vise grips.

63. Now take the inside access plug bracket. The arrow points to the three flaps. The pillar post, the rocker, and the flap of the plug bracket. Make sure these all lineup close. Hold them in place and tack weld it in the corners.

64. Take a hammer and bend the flap you had bent with the vise grip, back into place then weld it in solid.



65. Take the lower fender brace and position it. Note the arrow which shows where a spot weld was drilled out. Hold it back in its original place. If possible, attaching the front fender then aligning will help in the perfect attaching point of the brace. If you took measurements before taking it off, you should be in good shape.



66. Weld it in the original place where you drilled out the spot welds. Fill with weld to attach solidly. Now if you want to replace just a small section of a rocker that might have a hole and you want it to be authentic then proceed to the next booklet (Partial Inside Rocker Replacement)