

1953 - 1962 Corvette: Points to Electronic Ignition Conversion

From [Community Forum](#) Moderator, [59Tom](#):

"These electronic ignition conversions as well as ones from Pertronix, Mallory, The GM Goodwrench Performance Parts catalog and others fit inside of your distributor and take the place of the points pieces. You still use your basic distributor and tach drive. The Pertronix has been very popular with those who want to retain a stock distributor appearance. All of these brand names will give good service."

From [Community Forum](#) member, [Jack](#):

"I don't know about Jacobs, but I don't think that MSD currently offers a retro-fit that replaces points in YOUR Delco distributor (MSD does offer hot modules to fit factory HEI). I've heard many good things about the Pertronix points eliminator; most (Pertronix included) of the points eliminators are magnetic (Hall effect) "triggers"... but some (like the Mallory Unilite) use light/LED triggers ... the Unilites have a reputation for DOA failures ... something you can deal with at the track ... but not in a daily driver.

I don't know about the GM points eliminator ... it's probably a magnetic trigger. For a first-time ignition upgrade for MOST folk with a relatively stock-to-mild driver, I'd suggest simply replacing the points with a Pertronix or other magnetic trigger (GM too?) and replace-upgrade your factory canister-style coil with canister-style Pertronix or Accel Superstock or MSD Blaster or Mallory coils ... your GM dealer also offers both a GM-labeled MSD Blaster-upgrade canister-style coil and a GM-labeled MSD box. However, a decent factory point-triggered distributor is VERY, VERY reliable up to about 6K rpm (more if modified) ... and if it does fail ... you can troubleshoot @ roadside ... chevy points & condensor readily available ... most any bubba can R&R points.

I have also seen advertized at Mid America a stock-appearing hot HEI-type distributor that has a mechanical tach drive ... don't know who makes it and it's very pricey.

MOST MSD & Jacobs you hear about are add-ons (called ignition amplifiers) that change your factory "inductive" system to a hotter "capacitive discharge" system. Also, MOST MSD & Jacobs make a "multiple spark" that pulses plugs many times per event;

these "spark boxes" usually require a fair amount of wiring and a PROPER place to put the "box" ... C3's are notoriously short of free firewall space. Typically, those boxes' harness carry a very high voltage also; instead of 12 volts at primary side of the coil (as now)... you'll have 400 - 500 volts there (careful with that inside cockpit, it can bite ... permanently!!!). And, it is not uncommon for a box to hum or buzz and produce heat. However, I understand that MSD has recently come out with a "Stacker" system (pn 7000) that virtually eliminates most additional wiring and has somewhat reduced footprint & height... but if you have points now, you'll still have points as a "trigger" with the stacker ... like other MSD boxes, the stacker does not eliminate points. MSD does offer a replacement-upgrade corvette distributor that has a magnet-trigger, mechanical tach drive and both vacuum & mechanical advance (pn 8572 about \$290) ... however, it must be used in conjunction with one of their ignition amplifiers (spark boxes). A ton of street & bracket cars use the MSD 6 series CD boxes. Virtually all mid-to-upper NASCAR, SCCA and NHRA classes use a CD ignition ... MSD is by far the favorite and Jacobs is gaining a strong following ... Accel, Crane & Mallory have pretty good CD offerings/following too. Virtually all add-on CD ignitions require a spiral core-type spark plug wire set and probably a coil upgrade from stock too. I have two MSD boxes; a 6TN & 6M-2.

Here's a link to Pertronix company: <http://www.pertronix.com/>.

Here's a link to a Pertronix seller with good prices: www.carshopinc.com

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