

## The Delco AM/FM Stereo Multiplex Radio

Manufacturers have been putting radios into cars almost as long as they have been making cars. Today, it is highly unusual to see a car or truck without (at least) a four- or six-speaker, AM/FM stereo radio.

The first multi-band radio offered in a Chevrolet vehicle was Part Number 985697, which was a five-band unit offered in 1941. In addition to AM, the 1941 radio received the 16, 19, 25, 31-meter shortwave broadcast bands, as was common in Europe. Limitations imposed by the nature of AM broadcast meant that music fidelity was poor. FM broadcasts sounded much better, but FM radio stations were not common in the US until the late 1950s. Chevrolet first offered an AM/FM radio option (part number 985694) in mid-year 1963.

Starting with the 1965 model year, GM began offering an optional AM/FM pushbutton radio with stereo capability. The basic AM/FM radio was offered as Regular Production Option (RPO) U69 (cost: \$136.70); the multiplex stereo adapter was offered as RPO U79 (additional \$69.50). The adapter was “plug and play”, that is, no modification to the radio was necessary. The multiplex option included four speakers (two in the kick panels, two on the rear deck).



Page from the 1965 Dealer Accessory catalog



Delco AM/FM radio and separate multiplex unit, on the bench.



Radio and Multiplex unit, installed. Green “Stereo” indicator lights when receiving a multiplex broadcast. Controls are for volume, tone, balance and front/rear fader.

The multiplex adapter was a large unit, suspended under the dash on mid-size and full-size Chevrolet cars. Operating instructions for the stereo radio claimed “FM stereo reception from a Chevrolet stereo adapter is the nearest to ‘Concert Hall’ or ‘live’ entertainment which is available to an automobile owner”.



Kick panel speaker grilles.

Two 4x6 inch oval speakers were installed in the kick panels, and two 6x9 inch oval speakers were installed in the rear deck, on full-size cars only. Chevelles and Corvairs did not have the front speakers, so naturally the multiplex units offered with these cars did not have the fader control.



Multiplex units used on Corvairs and Chevelles looked like this.