



# Tech-Time

## Let there be light ...

### *How to upgrade your headlight and accessory lights on your Pontiac*

By Tom Locke

**The cheapest and easy way to upgrade our lighting** and retain the factory look for our Pontiacs is to use Sylvania's Xtravision Halogen replacement bulbs. They offer both standard and upgraded bulbs for our cars. They use the same 35 watts so no wiring modifications are needed. Xtravision bulbs run approximately \$20 and are available on Amazon and parts stores. *Sylvania Automotive Bulb Replacement Guide (sylvania-automotive.com)*

**Another option is Holley's RetroBright LED headlights.** They are available in a classic white 3k color hue similar to our older factory headlights, or modern white 5,700k color which is a whiter color with some blue. The disadvantage to these bulbs is that the face of the headlight assembly is flatter than our stock bulbs. They are pricey at approximately \$750 for a set of 4 (high/lows) or \$450 for a set of 2 7" bulbs. Holley headlight assemblies are DOT certified and allowed on the street.

*RetroBright – Holley*

*[www.holley.com/brands/holley\\_retrobright](http://www.holley.com/brands/holley_retrobright)*



**Peak Automotive also has an available LED headlight kit that is sealed.** Unfortunately, they only offer a bluer color hue @6,000K. They too are plug and play and are a cheaper option than Holley. I have read reviews indicating these are split bulb assemblies with the low and high beams split in the housing. This is kind of strange. I don't see a 5.75" offering for most of our cars. Peak's headlight assemblies are also DOT certified for driving on the street.

*[www.owi.com/retail/brands/peak-auto/automotive-lighting/sealed-beams/peak-sealed-led#description](http://www.owi.com/retail/brands/peak-auto/automotive-lighting/sealed-beams/peak-sealed-led#description)*

There are other options for LED conversions, most are not DOT certified and may come with some risk. Some are made of plastic; others are too powerful/bright.

**Another option is the use of headlight housings** that allow the owner to install a variety of bulbs to include LED or Halogen. Look for the assemblies that have a H4 bulb housing as the H4 is the same configuration as our factory bulb. Hella brand offers a nice glass assembly that is DOT certified and holds the H4 bulbs. Additionally, they offer a complete Halogen kit for our cars. Keep in mind these glass assemblies also have a rather flat face which appears different to our factory ones.

*Conversion Headlamps Vision Plus 5¾" Conversion Headlamp (myhellalights.com)*

Generally, to get more light on the road, you need more wattage when it comes to halogens.

More wattage means more amps and some cars' electrical system can't support the additional amps. Do your research on this when building/ordering a new headlight kit.

**How to determine amps.** Amps can be determined by dividing watts by volts; for example, a 100 watt bulb would be  $100/12 = 8.33$  amps (per bulb). There are some nice relay kits available that use your existing headlight switch to turn on and off the lights. These kits will have all the fuses and relays needed for the additional amps and are fairly easy to install. Mike Fleury brought in and is donating a kit designed for a two-headlight assembly. Let me know if you are interested in it.

*Amazon.com: OCTANE LIGHTING Ceramic H4 Headlight 4 Headlamp Light Bulb Socket Plug Relay Wiring Harness 4X6 : Automotive*

**Hazards and turn signals.** Lastly, If you want to run LED bulbs on your four-way hazards or turn signals you will need to modify your system to account for the LED bulbs or they will not pull enough load to trip your flasher relay(s). There are LED relays available for most cars and you may need two. There are also load equalizers that add a load to the circuit and allow the original relays to work.

*Tom is a member of the Board of Directors of the Valley of the Sun Pontiacs club*

*([www.valleysunpontiacs.com](http://www.valleysunpontiacs.com)). He presented this information at the club's Oct. 11 general meeting. He can be reached at [gtolockes1@msn.com](mailto:gtolockes1@msn.com)*