

Chapter 9



Engine Identification

This chapter contains information to enable you to identify the engine residing under the hood of your Chevelle. There are several different casting and stamping numbers that can be found on the block and various other components. They are all part of the puzzle that will help you identify whether your Chevelle is “numbers matching.”

Let's start with the date code and casting numbers. They are mainly for identification and quality control purposes. Through the casting date, the day/night shift indicator, and on some components, the clock position, it's possible for Chevrolet to pinpoint within an hour or so when the specific component was cast. Casting numbers also identify specific “families” of components. For example, cylinder heads with the same casting numbers will have similar applications. Date and casting codes are found on the block, heads, and intake manifold.

Another important set of numbers are the engine plant codes/engine ID numbers. These were stamped on the engine at the assembly plant, defining which particular displacement/horsepower/transmission type the assembly is and what Chevrolet division car it was to be installed in. In some years, the suffix code might also denote air conditioning or air injection reactor (A.I.R.) equipment.

After the engine was earmarked for installation into a particular car, the partial VIN was stamped into the block by the final assembly plant. For pre 1968 396 and L79 327 engines, this sequence included the last digit of the model year, a code for the final assembly plant, and the last six digits of the

chassis serial number (the sequence number). For 1968 and later engines, the division identifier (1=Chevrolet) was added to the stamping and placed first in the order of characters. The partial VIN was included mainly as a theft deterrent (the means of linking the engine to a particular car in case of theft).

Engine Identification Numbers

L6 - The engine identification codes are located on a machined pad on the right (passenger) side of the block behind the distributor.

V-8 - On both small-block and big-block V-8's, the engine codes are found on a machined pad on the front (passenger) side of the block just below the head. This pad is actually an extension of the block deck surface.



Photo courtesy of Mike Crown