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The opening pages of

1949 Ford F-1 Restoration Guide

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RESTORATION ESSENTIALS

1949 Ford F-1

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

RestorationEssentials single-year guide · Model year 1949 only · Bonus Built first-generation F-Series, F-1 half-ton

KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

- **Model year covered:** 1949 only — the F-1 half-ton of the 'Bonus Built' first-generation F-Series.
- **Series:** F-1 = 1/2-ton, 114-inch wheelbase, 4,700 lb GVWR, dedicated truck frame.
- **Engines (1949):** 226 cu in flathead six (H) — 95 hp at 3,300 rpm; 239 cu in flathead V8 (R) — 100 hp at 3,800 rpm.
- **Transmission (1949):** 3-speed manual, FLOOR shift (standard); heavy-duty 3-speed and 4-speed optional.
- **Rear axle (1949):** Spicer-Dana 41, 3.73:1.
- **Brakes:** Hydraulic drums, 11x2 in front, 11x1-3/4 in rear (1951 factory operator's-manual specification; common to the 1948–52 F-1).
- **Electrical:** 6-volt, POSITIVE ground.
- **Serial number (1949):** year digit '9'; H = 226 six; R = 239 V8.
- **Production (1949):** Not stated for the F-1 in the sources consulted — see the corrections file. Do not borrow 1948's figure.

1. Manufacturer history: Ford

Ford Motor Company was incorporated on June 16, 1903. The truck line began with the Model TT one-ton (announced July 27, 1917), the first factory-built pickup bed followed in 1925, then the Model AA (1928), Model BB (1933), and the flathead-V8 Model 50 pickup (1935). By 1941 Ford had sold more than four million trucks. Civilian production stopped for the war; Henry Ford died in April 1947; and the company relaunched with trucks first: the all-new F-Series went into production on November 27, 1947 — ahead of the all-new 1949 cars — and was publicly unveiled on January 16, 1948.

The trucks were numbered by capacity — F-1 half-ton through the three-ton F-8 'Big Job' — and sold under one banner: 'Bonus Built', a promise of more truck than the money strictly bought. The centerpiece was the cab: reportedly \$1 million spent on its design and tooling, earning it the 'Million Dollar Cab' nickname — seven inches wider than before, with a seat marketed as easy-chair comfort and a one-piece windshield. The F-1 rode a dedicated truck frame (not adapted car hardware) on a 114-inch wheelbase at 4,700 lb GVWR. Chevrolet outsold Ford through these years, which is precisely why honest Bonus Built survivors spent decades undervalued — and why documented originality matters now.

2. Model history: the Bonus Built F-1, and where 1949 sits

The first-generation F-Series ran 1948–1952. The arc, year by year: the debut (1948) — wide 'Million Dollar Cab', floor shift, black wheels, grille bars chrome then argent with red pinstripe; the detail year (1949) — pinstripe off, wheels body color, defroster and second taillight arrive; the transition year (1950) — the shifter climbs to the column mid-year and the bed goes smooth-sided, on record production; the restyle (1951) — single-bar grille, larger rear window, Five Star cab trims, wood bed floor, Dana 44 axle; and the finale (1952) — Ford's first overhead-valve engine, in the truck before the cars. This guide covers 1949 only.

3. What is unique about the 1949 F-1

- The detail year. The most noticeable change: the red pinstripes come off the silver-painted grille bars. A pinstriped grille is 1948 (late) equipment, not 1949.
- Wheels are painted to match body color instead of black — the fastest 1948/1949 separator at twenty paces.
- A defroster joins the options list (1948 offered heater only).
- The passenger-side taillight becomes standard, with reflectors on both sides — single-taillight 1949s are either very early or missing equipment.
- Running boards are trimmed at the frame for ease of replacement, ending the 1948 curve-over-the-frame configuration.
- Engineering carries over: same engines, floor shift, Dana 41. Verify equipment on any individual truck against its serial number and the parts book rather than assigning features by year alone.

Year-change register — 1949:

- CHANGED: grille-bar red pinstripe deleted; wheels black → body color; running boards trimmed at the frame.
- NEW: defroster option; standard passenger-side taillight and reflectors.
- UNCHANGED: 226 / 239 engines, floor-shift transmissions, Dana 41 axle, cab and bed structure.

4. Technical restoration data — 1949 Ford F-1

4.1 Specification table (1949)

Item	1949 specification
Series / wheelbase / GVWR	F-1 1/2-ton / 114 in / 4,700 lb
Transmission	3-speed manual, FLOOR shift (standard); heavy-duty 3-speed and 4-speed optional
Rear axle	Spicer-Dana 41, 3.73:1
Brakes	Hydraulic drums: 11x2 in front, 11x1-3/4 in rear; 1-1/16 in master cylinder; 178 sq in lining
Electrical	6-volt, positive ground
Production	Not stated for the F-1 in the sources consulted — see the corrections file. Do not borrow 1948's figure.
Prices	Not printed — see the corrections file.

Engines (1949):

Engine	Rating	Notes
226 cu in flathead six (H)	95 hp at 3,300 rpm	Standard engine, carried over.
239 cu in flathead V8 (R)	100 hp at 3,800 rpm	Optional, carried over.

4.2 Serial-number decoding (1949)

The serial number is stamped on the frame and carried on the rating / builder's plate: series, engine, model year, assembly plant, and consecutive unit number, in that order. Decode the frame stamping, not just the plate — plates get swapped; the frame number is the truck's legal identity. The engine digit is the first correctness check: an 'H' truck wearing a V8 (or an 'R' truck wearing a six) has had an engine swap, and it should be documented as one.

Position	Meaning	This year's code
1–2	Series: F1 = F-1 1/2-ton	F1
3	Engine: H = 226 six; R = 239 V8 (1952 215 six: see this guide's serial note)	See spec table
4	Model year digit	See spec table
5–6	Assembly plant code	e.g. DL, KC on documented survivors
7+	Consecutive unit number	—