

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1952 Chevrolet Advance Design 3100 Restoration Guide

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1952 Chevrolet Advance Design 3100 Restoration Guide

Model Years 1952

Model year	1952 - push-button door handles; 90-mph speedometer
Series	3100 = 1/2-ton, 116-inch wheelbase
Serial prefix (3100)	KP
Engine	216 Stovebolt six
Brakes	Bendix drums
Trim note	Dashboard trim color-matched, not chrome

Every specification in this guide was checked against factory literature, marque references, period road tests, and documented survivor vehicles. Where sources disagree or the record is silent, this guide says so rather than guessing.

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How This Guide Works

This is a **single-year restoration** guide for the 1952 Chevrolet 3100 - one year of the Advance Design (1947-1953 in this series), Chevrolet's first all-new postwar truck line. The year gets its own guide because the running changes are the restoration: fuel-tank location, shifter position, brake design, bed boards, door hardware, and the serial system itself all change inside this span, and a factory-correct truck matches its own year. Specifications were checked against the factory Chevrolet Truck Shop Manual tradition, the shop-manual compilations at 1954advance-design.com, and the Stovebolt.com serial charts. Where the record is silent or sources disagree, this guide says so instead of guessing.

Scope. Covers the 1952 3100 1/2-ton pickup on the 116-inch wheelbase, with notes where the 3600 (125.25-inch) and 3800 (137-inch) differ. GMC's New Design trucks shared the cab and chassis but ran GMC engines and trim - a GMC serial plate will not decode with Chevrolet tables. Panel, Canopy Express, and Suburban Carryall variants share the 3100 running gear covered here.

Where 1952 sits in the run

- Coming in: the 1951 modernization truck - vent windows and Bendix brakes in place, but turn-down door handles, an 80-mph speedometer, and chrome dash trim.
- Leaving: 1953 keeps the hardware but changes the paperwork: a new serial system, a blue ID plate, and the last year of the 216. A 1952 decodes the old way - KP prefix.

Platform Snapshot

The Advance Design was a clean break from the prewar AK Series: a roomier all-steel "Unisteel" cab wide enough for three across, a wider frame, and the five-horizontal-bar grille that defines the look. Underneath it stayed deliberately simple - a solid front axle, an enclosed torque-tube driveline, and the 216 Stovebolt six Chevrolet had refined since 1937. That simplicity is why these trucks restore well.

Fact	Detail
Model year	1952 (Advance Design, within the 1947-1953 series)
Designation	3100 = 1/2-ton; 3600 = 3/4-ton; 3800 = 1-ton
Wheelbase	3100: 116 in; 3600: 125.25 in; 3800: 137 in
Body styles	Pickup; panel; Canopy Express; Suburban Carryall; chassis-cab
Engine	216 cu in Stovebolt inline-6 (3100 standard)
Driveline	Enclosed torque tube to a hypoid rear axle
Brakes	Four-wheel hydraulic drums, Bendix type
Electrical	6-volt, negative ground
Transmissions	3-speed manual (column); 4-speed manual (floor)
Shocks	Telescopic tube type



The 1952 Register - What Makes a 1952 a 1952

- Outer door handles become PUSH-BUTTON type, replacing the turn-down style used through 1951. Vent window plus push-button handle is the 1952-53 door.
- The speedometer now reads to 90 MPH (was 80).
- Dashboard trim is COLOR-MATCHED (painted) instead of chrome - a Korean War-era materials change that reads as a trim downgrade but is factory-correct for 1952.
- MID-YEAR: Chevrolet stops applying the 3100-6400 series designations on the hood, and the window and wiper knobs change to MAROON. Early 1952s carry hood numerals and chrome knobs; late 1952s carry neither.
- Serial prefix is KP for the 1/2-ton (KR 3/4-ton, KS 1-ton) - the last year of the two-letter prefix system.

Serial-Plate Decoding

There is no standardized VIN on these trucks. The serial plate lives on the driver-side door hinge pillar and carries a prefix-coded serial number: the letter prefix identifies the series and model year, followed by the assembly plant code and the consecutive unit number. Chevrolet changed the prefix scheme more than once during 1947-53, so always decode with the year-specific chart - the Stovebolt.com identification pages reproduce the factory series/year/wheelbase table.

Year	3100 prefix	Wheelbase
1952	KP	116 in

- 1952 1/2-ton prefix is KP (3/4-ton KR, 1-ton KS). The ID plate is black with silver letters - the blue plate is a 1953 part.
- Engine identity is separate from the serial plate (see Engines).

Paint and trim codes. Plate paint/trim coding varies by year and plant. Read what is stamped on your truck's plate and decode it against the Chevrolet truck data book for that year; do not borrow a code table from a different year.

Engines

Engine	Years (3100)	Notes
216 Stovebolt I6	1952 standard	216.48 cu in; 3-1/2 in bore x 3-3/4 in stroke; four-main crankshaft

The 216: what you are rebuilding

- Displacement 216.48 cu in from a 3-1/2-inch bore and 3-3/4-inch stroke. Compression is 6.5:1 in early form and 6.6:1 in late Advance Design tune, which the factory rated at 92 hp for 1949.
- The 216 does NOT have a fully pressurized oiling system. The connecting rods are fed from an oil trough in the pan: spray nozzles squirt oil at the rods, and dippers on the rod caps scoop it to the bearings.
- Rod bearings are babbit cast integral with the rod - there are no modern insert shells to drop in. Clearance is set by removing copper shims stacked between rod cap and rod. If the crankshaft is ground undersize or a bearing is damaged, rod and bearing were replaced as a unit in period practice.