

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1960-1987 Chevrolet/GMC Suburban Buyer's Guide

Read these pages exactly as they appear in the full guide.
Nothing here is rewritten or summarised — it is the product itself,
so you can judge the depth before you spend a dollar.

ide: <https://restoreessentials.com/product/RE-GD-1960-CHEVROLET-SUBURBAN-BUY>

RestorationEssentials — instant PDF download after checkout.



RESTORATIONESSENTIALS

Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1960-1987 Chevrolet/GMC Suburban Buyer's Guide

Model Year 1960-1987

Models	Chevrolet/GMC Suburban C/K (R/V from 1987)
Years	1960-1987; collector focus 1967-72
Smart money	SPID-verified 1967-72; TBI square bodies
Watch for	Long-body rust; trim claims; engine confusion
Parts	Best in hobby (1967+); thin 1960-66

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

Published by RestorationEssentials

Inside This Guide

The chapter order follows the RestorationEssentials house standard: history first, then year-specific identity, then the technical chapters you will use at the car.



- **Chapter 1: Three Generations, One Nameplate**
- **Chapter 2: 1960-1966: The First C/K Suburbans**
- **Chapter 3: 1967-1972: The Three-Door (Collector Focus)**
- **Chapter 4: 1973-1987: The Square Body**
- **Chapter 5: Engines Across the Years**
- **Chapter 6: Transmissions, Transfer Cases, and Axles**
- **Chapter 7: The Door Question**
- **Chapter 8: Rust Inspection**
- **Chapter 9: Mechanical Inspection**
- **Chapter 10: Paperwork: VIN and SPID**
- **Chapter 11: Pricing and the Market**
- **Chapter 12: Parts Reality Check**
- **Chapter 13: The Test Drive**
- **Chapter 14: Walk-Away Signs**
- **Chapter 15: Sources Consulted**
- **Chapter 16: Thank You**

Chapter 1 — Three Generations, One Nameplate

The Suburban is the oldest continuous nameplate in American motoring, and the 1960–1987 span covers three distinct trucks: the 1960–1966 first C/K Suburbans (115-inch wheelbase, wrap-around windshield early, torsion bars then coils), the 1967–1972 three-doors (127-inch wheelbase, the collector generation), and the 1973–1987 square bodies (the usable classics, diesel option from 1982).

The honest hierarchy: the 1967–1972 trucks are the collector play — three-door identity, rising market, younger buyers entering. The 1973–1987 trucks are the usable play — square-body parts support is the deepest in the hobby, and the trucks are modern enough for real work. The 1960–1966 trucks are the vintage play — thinner parts, lower prices, early-C/K charm.

Generation	Years	Buyer take
5th (1st C/K)	1960-66	Vintage; 115-in wb; thinner parts
6th (3-door)	1967-72	Collector; 127-in wb; rising
7th (square)	1973-87	Usable; deepest parts; diesel opt.

Chapter 2 — 1960-1966: The First C/K Suburbans

The 1960 redesign brought the C/K designation (C = 2WD, K = 4WD), the 115-inch wheelbase, and — significantly — the factory 4WD option. Before 1960, 4WD was an aftermarket kit installed at the buyer's request; from 1960 it was factory-engineered. The 1960–61 trucks wore the 'wrap-around' windshield and the large oval ports over the grille; 1962 cleaned up the face with dual headlights and a flat windshield.

Mechanical notes: torsion-bar front suspension on 1960–62 (coils from 1963), independent front on 2WD, engines from the 235/230/250 sixes to the 283 V8 with the 327 joining in 1966. GMC's 305 V6 was the distinctive option. These are simple, honest trucks — and the parts are the thinnest of the three generations: mechanical (small block) fine, sheet metal salvage-first.



Buying: the 1960–61 wrap-windshield trucks are the styling standouts; the 1964–66 trucks are the most usable. Prices trail the 1967–72 trucks significantly — the value entry to the vintage Suburban. Buy completeness; the trim and details are the hunt.

Chapter 3 — 1967-1972: The Three-Door (Collector Focus)

The collector generation: 127-inch wheelbase, three doors (one driver, two passenger, curb-side rear), Suburban-unique tail panel and taillights, and the engine menu from the 250 six to the 402 big block. Hagerty's 2026 reporting: these trucks are catching up to the pickups, driven by younger collectors. The market is moving — the trucks aren't getting cheaper.

What to buy: K-series 4x4s (especially K20), big-block trucks (396/402, verified by casting — the 400 small block is a different engine), Cheyenne and Cheyenne Super trim (SPID-verified), and the best-preserved originals. The 1971+ disc brakes are the usability bright line. Liftgate vs. panel doors: buy the truck, not the door — but verify the type against the model code (06 panel, 16 liftgate).

The traps: Cheyenne trim without SPID support, big-block badges on small-block trucks, wrong-year grilles (1967/1968/1969–70/1971–72 all differ), and the 400SB-vs-402BB confusion. The SPID is the build sheet — photograph and decode it before you price the truck.

Chapter 4 — 1973-1987: The Square Body

The square-body Suburban (1973–1991, but this guide stops at 1987) is the usable classic: the deepest aftermarket in the hobby, modern enough for daily work, old enough for character. The 1973–1980 trucks carry 13-digit VINs (door-pillar plate 1973–78, dash 1979+); 1981+ carry 17-digit VINs. C/K through 1986, R/V from 1987.

Engine menu: 250/292 sixes, 305/350/400/454 V8s, the 6.2L diesel from 1982, TBI on the gas V8s for 1987. Transmissions: TH350/TH400, 700R4 from 1982, manuals. The 1987 TBI trucks are the sweet spot — fuel injection, overdrive options, and the classic square-body look. The 6.2 diesel is economical and slow; buy it for economy, not speed.

Buying: the square bodies lived their lives in the salt era — geography matters enormously. A Southwest truck is worth the premium. The 3/4-ton trucks are common and useful; the half-tons ride better. Tailgate vs. barn doors both available — verify against the SPID, buy the truck not the door. These are the easiest old Suburbans to own — parts everywhere, knowledge everywhere.

Chapter 5 — Engines Across the Years

Engine	Years	Buyer take
235/250/292 I6	1960-87	Honest, slow, indestructible
283/307/327/350	1960-87	The small-block stream; 350 ideal
396/402 BB	1968-72	Big-block premium; verify casting
305/351 GMC V6	1960-69	Curiosity; thin parts
454 BB	1973-87	The square-body torque king
6.2 diesel	1982-87	Economical, slow; buy for economy

The small block is the default right answer in every generation — common, correct, rebuildable anywhere, with the deepest parts stream in motoring. The 350 is the ideal all-rounder; the sixes are the value play (the market discounts them; they don't care). The big blocks carry premiums as the top factory options — verified by casting