

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1978 Dodge D100/D150 Restoration Guide

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Nothing here is rewritten or summarised — it is the product itself,
so you can judge the depth before you spend a dollar.

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1978 Dodge D100/D150 Restoration Guide

Model Years 1978

Model year	1978 - D-Series year 7 of 9 (1972-1980 span)
Designation	D100/D150 and W100/W150 half-tons (by GVWR, per the mid-1977 split)
Engines	225 slant six, 318 LA V8, 360 LA V8, 360 police (Li'l Red), 400 B V8, 440 RB V8, 6DR5 diesel (Mitsubishi)
Front tell	Facelift grille carried over; round headlights (quads arrive 1979, upper trims)
Identifiers	Tilt column and factory hitch hardware are 1978-first equipment.

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.

Published by RestorationEssentials



How This Guide Works

This is a **single-year restoration** guide for the 1978 Dodge D100 and W100 - one year of the third-generation D-Series (1972-1980), covered on its own because that is how these trucks were built, badged, and optioned, and how they must be restored. Specifications were checked against the marque model history, MotorTrend's Dodge truck centennial history, and factory literature. Where sources disagree, this guide prints the disagreement instead of guessing.

Scope. Covers 1978 half-tons under both D100/D150 and W100/W150 badges, including the Li'l Red Express and the one-year Midnite Express story.

Where 1978 sits in the run

- **Coming in:** 1977 facelifted the line and split the badging by GVWR mid-year.
- **Leaving:** 1979 refreshes the front end with quad lamps on upper trims and deletes the 400, the 440, and the in-cab tank.

Platform Snapshot

Fact	Detail
Model year	1978
Designation	D100/D150 and W100/W150 half-tons (by GVWR, per the mid-1977 split)
Platform	Chrysler AD, body-on-frame
Wheelbases	115 / 131 in standard cab; 133 / 149 in Club Cab
Front suspension (2WD)	Double-wishbone, coil springs (independent)
Front suspension (4WD)	Leaf-sprung live axle (Dana 44)
Grille / front tell	Facelift grille carried over; round headlights (quads arrive 1979, upper trims)
Front brakes	Front discs (2WD and 4WD); rear drums
Ignition	Electronic ignition standard (gasoline)
Beds	Sweptline (full-width) or Utiline (stepside)

The 1978 Register - What Makes a 1978 a 1978

- Tilt steering wheel offered for the first time; factory-installed trailer hitch offered for the first time.
- Transfer-case shifter gains a positive range detent against accidental engagement.
- Club Cab available with bucket seats; more radio options, including CB, stereo, and 8-track; Adventurer SE now available on all models.
- Mitsubishi 6DR5 diesel offered in D/W150 and D/W200 (not in California): 4.0 liters, 105 hp, 169 lb-ft, through a big-block-pattern adapter plate. Rare then, rarer now - 2,835 built across 1978-79.
- Li'l Red Express debuts - the fastest American production vehicle story of the year (see Special Editions).
- Midnite Express: a dealer-installed package for 1978 only, built from high-option Warlocks where the Li'l Red could not be sold - not a factory option.
- Final year for the 440 and 400 in these trucks.



VIN, Fender Tag, and Broadcast Sheet

The VIN is stamped on the frame and carried on the door tag; the fender tag under the hood carries the option codes, and the broadcast (build) sheet - hunt under the seats, behind the glovebox, above the fuel tank - is the truck's birth certificate. Decode all three before ordering year-specific parts: on these trucks the tag adjudicates disputes, and the tag plus the broadcast sheet ends them.

Engines: The 1978 Menu

All ratings are SAE net, as published for the year. The engine in the truck is what the fender tag and the block stampings say it is - decode both before ordering parts.

Engine	Output (net)	Notes
225 slant six	Base six	2-barrel on heavy-GVWR trucks
318 LA V8	135 hp	Rating drops for 1978
360 LA V8	Small block	Standard-truck tune
360 police (Li'l Red)	225 hp / 295 lb-ft	Li'l Red Express only
400 B V8	185-250 hp by tune	Final year
440 RB V8	225 hp	Final year
6DR5 diesel (Mitsubishi)	105 hp / 169 lb-ft	D/W150-200; not sold in California

Engine note. The Li'l Red's 360 is a police-specification engine that was already emissions-certified - that certification is the whole reason a genuinely fast truck could be sold in 1978. Its carburetor, distributor curve, and cam are the mechanical identity; a standard 360 with stacks is a tribute.

Restoring the 1978 engines

- 225 slant six: the leaning tower of power - simple, durable, and cheap to rebuild correctly. Check the exhaust manifold for cracks and the carburetor for worn throttle shafts.
- 318/360 LA small blocks: the volume engines. The 360 is externally balanced - keep its balancer and converter hardware with it.
- Big blocks (where fitted): verify the radiator is the correct big-block unit; a small-block radiator doing its best is an overheating truck.
- Casting numbers and date codes: the casting date should precede the truck's build date by weeks, not follow it.

Transmissions and Transfer Cases

Unit	Type	Application
3-speed manual	Column-shift	Base, light-duty
4-speed manual (NP435)	Floor-shift, granny low	Heavy-duty / 4WD favorite
TorqueFlite 727	3-speed automatic	Optional across the line

Full-time case standard on W models, now with the positive-detent shifter. Check the detent on a survivor - a shifter that wanders is a safety item, not a quirk.