

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1971 Chevrolet C/K Truck Restoration Guide

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1971 Chevrolet C/K Truck Restoration Guide

Model Years 1971

Model year	1971 — the disc-brake and Cheyenne year
Engines	250, 292 I6; 307, 350, 402 V8
Headline changes	Front disc brakes standard on all light-duty; Cheyenne replaces CST
Trim ladder	Custom / Custom Deluxe / Cheyenne / Cheyenne Super (mid-year)
Brakes	Front discs standard; power assist optional on C10
VIN format	12-character, year digit "1" in position 5

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 1971 Chevrolet C/K — one year of the “Action Line” (1967–1972), covered on its own because that is how these trucks were built and how they must be restored. Specifications were checked against the LMC Truck chassis-identification references, the RubberTheRightWay VIN decoder compilation, marque references, and documented survivor trucks. Where sources disagree, this guide prints the disagreement instead of guessing.

Scope. Covers 1971 C10/C20/C30 (2WD) and K10/K20 (4WD) pickups and chassis-cabs. The K5 Blazer shares this chassis and has its own dedicated RestorationEssentials guide. GMC trucks share architecture but carry their own codes and trim.

Where 1971 sits in the run

- Coming in: the biggest hardware change of the run — standard front disc brakes across the light-duty line — wrapped in a new grille and a renamed trim ladder.
- Leaving: 1972 keeps the 1971 face and adds its changes inside the cab (plastic door panels, windshield-glued mirror) and on paper (net ratings, a 13-character VIN). A 1971 restored with 1972 interior parts is wrong in ways judges notice.

Platform Snapshot

1971 is the Action Line’s modernization: disc brakes for every light-duty truck, an eggcrate grille, compression lowered across the engine range for the low-lead-fuel era, and the Cheyenne name taking the top of the trim ladder. It is also a transition year — the Cheyenne Super arrives only as a mid-year running change, so build date matters as much as model year.

Fact	Detail
Model year	1971 (Action Line year 5 of 6)
Designation	C = 2WD, K = 4WD; 10/20/30 = 1/2-, 3/4-, 1-ton
Body styles	Fleetside and Stepside pickups; chassis-cab; K5 Blazer (separate RE guide)
Wheelbases	115 / 127 in; Longhorn 133 in; Blazer 104 in
Engines	250/292 I6; 307, 350, 402 V8 (gross ratings, lowered compression)
Rear suspension (2WD)	Coil-spring trailing arm (leaf optional)
Brakes	FRONT DISCS STANDARD, all light-duty C/K; rear drums

The 1971 Register — What Makes a 1971 a 1971

- Front disc brakes are standard on ALL light-duty C/K trucks — 10/20/30 series, 2WD and 4WD. The often-quoted “1/2-ton only” understates it. Corollary: 2WD half-tons switch from 6-lug to 5-lug hubs.
- Power brake assist is still OPTIONAL on the C10 (standard on heavier pickups) — a manual-disc C10 is factory-correct, not a stripper mistake.
- New eggcrate grille: full eggcrate insert, bowtie back in the grille center, horizontal bar gone, parking lamps moved into the bumper.



- Trim ladder renamed: base becomes Custom; the old Custom becomes Custom Deluxe; CST is replaced by Cheyenne at the top.
- Cheyenne Super arrives as a RUNNING CHANGE during 1971 (woodgrain dash and glovebox door, full instrumentation, chrome tailgate handle, woodgrain side moldings). An early-1971 truck cannot be a factory Super — the SPID is the proof.
- The 402 (in trucks since 1970) is now badged “400”; 300 gross hp in the factory service manual. 402 fitment is C-series (2WD) — no factory K-series 402 listings.
- First factory AM/FM radio option; tilt column newly optional (with automatic or 4-speed).
- Rearview mirror still bolts to the cab roof (windshield-glued is 1972). Door panels are metal (plastic is 1972).

VIN and Data-Plate Decoding

The 12-character system runs its final year. There is NO dash VIN on these trucks — the metal plate is riveted inside the driver's door jamb; the VIN is also on the SPID (inside the glovebox door, with the serial number, wheelbase, every factory option, and paint info) and stamped on the frame by the steering box.

Position	Meaning	Codes
1st	Chassis	C = 2WD, K = 4WD
2nd	Engine family	S = inline-6, E = V8
3rd	Series	1 = 1/2-ton, 2 = 3/4-ton, 3 = 1-ton
4th	Body	4 = pickup, 8 = Blazer/Jimmy
5th	Model year	1 = 1971
6th	Assembly plant	A Atlanta, B Baltimore, F Flint, J Janesville, N Norwood, P Pontiac, S St. Louis, T Tarrytown, Z Fremont, U Lordstown, 1 Oshawa
7th–12th	Serial	Consecutive unit number

Worked example: **CE141S667824** — 2WD (C), V8 (E), 1/2-ton (1), pickup (4), 1971 (1), St. Louis (S).

Cheyenne proof. Badges do not prove a Cheyenne or a Super — the SPID does. Supers were coded on the SPID (one source reports the label “Custom Sport Truck,” code YE9). Decode before paying a premium for the name.

Engines

Same displacements, lower compression: GM lowered compression ratios for 1971 so the range could run on low-lead/unleaded-era fuel, and the gross ratings step down accordingly. These are period GROSS figures; 1972's lower numbers are a change of measurement (net), not another power cut.

Engine	Carb	Rating (gross)	Notes
250 I6	Rochester 1-bbl	145 hp @ 4200	Base six (was 155)
292 I6	1-bbl	165 hp @ 4000	Optional six (was 170)
307 V8	Rochester 2-bbl	200 hp @ 4600	Volume small-block
350 V8	4-bbl	250 hp @ 4600	Was 255 in 1969–70 trim