

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1969 Chevrolet Suburban Restoration Guide

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1969 Chevrolet Suburban Restoration Guide

Model Years 1969

Model	Chevrolet/GMC Suburban C10/C20/K10/K20
Platform	Body-on-frame; 127-in wheelbase; three-door
Engines	250/292 I6; 307/350 V8; 396 big block; GMC 305 V6 (early)
Brakes	Four-wheel drums
Notable	350 debuts; GMC V6 era ends mid-year

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 1969 Chevrolet/GMC Suburban — one year of the three-door Action Line generation (1967–1972), covered on its own because engines, trim, brakes, and details changed every year, and a factory-correct restoration matches the year on the VIN and the SPID, not the generation average. Specifications were checked against the range guide's factory-referenced base material, marque references, and period data. Where sources disagree, this guide prints the disagreement instead of guessing.



Scope. Covers 1969 C10/C20 (2WD) and K10/K20 (4WD) Suburbans, Chevrolet and GMC, with liftgate (model code 16) or panel doors (code 06). The separate panel truck and the K5 Blazer/Jimmy have their own guides.

Where 1969 sits in the run

- Coming in: 1968 added the 396 and side markers and replaced the 283 with the 307.
- Leaving: 1970 brings the 402 badged as '400', factory 8-track/stereo availability, and the last year of the separate panel truck.

Year-Change Register — 1969

What makes a 1969 a 1969. Fit anything on this list from another year and the truck stops being factory-correct for its year.

- 350 replaces the 327 — 255 hp gross in period data, and the desirable small-block of the run for its torque.
- GMC's 305 V6 ends mid-year; after the split, GMC Suburbans share Chevrolet's engine menu.
- Revised grille for the Action Line mid-cycle — match grille and trim to 1969, not to the generation.
- 396 big-block continues.

Identity: VIN, SPID, and Documentation

- VIN pattern: the first characters decode as division / drive (C = 2WD, K = 4WD), engine (E = V8), series (1 = 1/2-ton, 2 = 3/4-ton), 09 = Suburban body, then 06 = panel doors or 16 = liftgate — e.g. CE10906 is a V8 C10 Suburban with panel doors; KE20916 a K20 4WD with liftgate.
- Assembly plants: F = Flint, J = Janesville, Z = Fremont, B = Baltimore, V = Pontiac, 1 = Oshawa. The plant letter is in the VIN; the frame stamping should match it.
- The SPID (Service Parts Identification) decal in the glovebox is the build sheet: every RPO the truck was born with. Photograph it before it deteriorates further — it is the single most important document on the truck.
- VINs can be transplanted from Blazers, panels, and other trucks sharing the format — verify the first characters against the body in front of you before paying for a story.

Engines — the 1969 Menu

Engine	Type	Notes
250 I6	Inline six	Standard engine
292 I6	Inline six	The big-six option
307 V8	Small block	Continues
350 V8	Small block	New for 1969; 255 hp gross
396 V8	Big block	310 hp / 400 lb-ft (period)
305 V6	GMC V6	GMC only; ends mid-year 1969

The 350's arrival completes the small-block progression (283, 307, 327, 350 — one family, one rebuild doctrine). A documented early-1969 GMC V6 truck is the end of a divisional era: preserve it exactly, V6-specific manifolds, mounts, and brackets are a dedicated hunt.



Casting numbers rule. Badges lie and swaps are common: verify displacement by casting number and date code, and the engine against the VIN's engine code and the SPID, before valuing any truck.

Chassis, Suspension, and Brakes

Four-wheel drums — the last full drum years are 1969-70. Full-system restoration doctrine applies; a 1971-style disc conversion is a driver modification, documented as such.

- 2WD: independent front suspension with coil springs; trailing-arm rear with coil springs (leaf rear optional; GMC standard/optional arrangement reversed). Trailing-arm bushings are the forgotten wear item — replace them.
- 4WD: leaf springs at both ends, Dana 44 front axle, NP205 gear-drive transfer case, manual locking hubs. Reseal the NP205 at minimum; service hubs, bearings, and U-joints.
- Steering: recirculating-ball box — rebuild it; 50 years of play is 50 years of wander. Tie rods and drag link with it.

Body, Rust, and Sheet Metal

- Rockers and floor pans — front footwells first; the 127-inch body means long rockers and long floors, and more exposure.
- Lower edges of all three doors; the third (curb-side rear) door's lower edge and frame are Suburban-specific rot points.
- Rear wheel arches and rear wheelhouses — probe from the cargo side; the cargo floor rots under mats and liners, which trap moisture and hide the truth.
- Tailgate / panel-door lower edges and frames; the rear of the truck collects water.
- Windshield frame lower corners at the gasket, and drip rails.
- Frame: tap the rails (ring good, thud bad), probe boxed sections and body-mount outriggers; mid-rails collect mud. A frame rotted mid-rail is a parts truck.
- Reproduction support is deep (LMC Truck, Classic Industries, Brothers) for floors, rockers, and doors — but order Suburban-specific panels; pickup panels do not stretch.

The Three-Door Body and the Rear Doors

Every 1967–1972 Suburban is a three-door: one driver's door, two curb-side doors, the rear door opening away from traffic. The third door's hinges, latches, and seals are Suburban-specific — rebuild sagging hinges rather than shimming the striker, clean seal channels to bare metal, and water-test before the interior goes in. At the rear, the SPID and model code say which the truck was born with: liftgate (16) or panel doors (06). Liftgate hinges, struts, and glass seals wear; panel-door hinges seize and both styles rot at the lower edge.

Interior, Trim, and Paint

Restore to the SPID's trim and paint codes, in the correct materials. Two-tone break lines are year-specific and the white-roof two-tones are the signature look. Period-correct single-stage paint is the restoration choice; base/clear is the durable driver choice — both defensible, neither wrong. Under-hood: correct black engine bay, satin chassis, Chevrolet orange on Chevrolet engines.