

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1970 Chevrolet Suburban Restoration Guide

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1970 Chevrolet Suburban Restoration Guide

Model Years 1970

Model	Chevrolet/GMC Suburban C10/C20/K10/K20
Platform	Body-on-frame; 127-in wheelbase; three-door
Engines	250/292 I6; 307/350 V8; 402 big block ('400'); 400 small block
Brakes	Four-wheel drums — final drum year
Notable	The two '400s': 402 big block vs. 400 small block

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 1970 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 1970 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 1970 sits in the run

- Coming in: 1969 brought the 350 and ended the GMC V6 mid-year.
- Leaving: 1971 brings standard front disc brakes, the Cheyenne trim, the egg-crate grille, and the 2WD move to 5-lug wheels.

Year-Change Register — 1970

What makes a 1970 a 1970. Fit anything on this list from another year and the truck stops being factory-correct for its year.

- The 396 is punched out to 402 cubic inches and labeled '400' — see the conflict note in the engine chapter.
- The 400 small-block also appears in the line's spec tables — a different engine from the 402 big block despite the shared badge number.
- Factory 8-track/stereo availability (SPID-verified).
- Last year of the separate panel truck (the Suburban's panel-door body style 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 1970 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	255 hp gross (period)
402 V8	Big block	Badged '400'
400 V8	Small block	Not the 402 — verify by casting

1970 is the badge trap year. The range guide's year table dates the 396-to-402 change to 1970 while its big-block chapter text says 1971 — this guide follows the year table and prints the conflict rather than hiding it. Either way, the casting number, not the badge, is the arbiter: a '400' can be a big-block 402 or a small-block 400, and the



difference is four figures.

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 final year. Everything hydraulic gets renewed on a restoration; 1971's discs are one model year away and the temptation to convert should stay a documented driver choice, not a silent swap.

- 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.