

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

K5 Blazer Jimmy Restoration Guide 1973 1991

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

K5 Blazer / Jimmy Restoration Guide

Model Years 1973–1991

Generation	2nd generation — half-cab K5
Roof	Full convertible (1973–75); fixed front roof + removable rear (1976–91)
Engines	305, 350, 400, 454 (early); 305/350 + 6.2 diesel (later); TBI 1987+
Transfer cases	NP203 / NP205 (early); NP208 (1981+); NP241 (1988+)
Transmissions	SM465 4-spd; TH350/TH400; 700R4 (1982+)
Headline fact	K5 outlived the pickup Squarebody — built through 1991

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 **restoration** guide for the second-generation Chevrolet K5 Blazer and GMC Jimmy — model years 1973 through 1991, the half-cab trucks that outlived the pickup Squarebody by four years. Specifications were checked against GM VIN references, marque documentation, and period literature. Where the record is silent, this guide says so instead of guessing.

Scope. Covers 4WD K5 Blazer/Jimmy 1973–91. 2WD Blazers were built through 1982 (the majority were 4WD). The 1992 Tahoe/Yukon is a different generation and is outside this guide's scope.

Platform Snapshot

The 1973 K5 moved to the Squarebody pickup chassis and — after 1975 — traded the full convertible top for a fixed front roof with a removable rear section: the half-cab design that defined the truck for the next sixteen years. When the pickups went to the new GMT400 body for 1988, the K5 (renamed R/V Blazer) carried on through 1991 — the longest run of any Blazer generation.

Fact	Detail
Model years	1973–1991
Roof	Full convertible (1973–75); half-cab (1976–91)
Engines	305/350/400/454 gasoline (1970s); 305/350 + 6.2 diesel (1980s); TBI from 1987
Transmissions	SM465 4-spd; TH350/TH400; 700R4 overdrive auto (1982+)
Transfer cases	NP203 (1973–79); NP205; NP208 (1981+); NP241 (1988+)
Front axle	Dana 44 (early); GM 10-bolt (1977+)
Military cousin	CUCV M1009 — the diesel military Blazer

Year-by-Year Changes

1973–1975

- Squarebody K5 on the new pickup chassis. Full removable convertible top through 1975 — the last of the open K5s.
- NP203 full-time transfer case on most 4x4s (same operation rules as the pickup guide: High for street, Loc only off-pavement).
- Engine menu mirrors the pickups: 307/350/400 small-blocks and the 454.

1976

- Half-cab design: fixed front roof with removable rear top section. This is the defining change of the generation — 1976+ tops, seals, and roof structure differ from 1973–75.

1977–1980

- GM 10-bolt front axle replaces the Dana 44 (1977). Grille and trim evolve with the pickup line; the 1980 trucks carry the early front-end treatment.



1981–1987

- 1981 facelift (flatter grille, horizontal markers, cowl-parked wipers) and NP208 transfer case.
- 1982: 700R4 overdrive automatic and 6.2L diesel introduced. The 305 becomes the volume gasoline engine.
- 1987: throttle-body injection on the 350 — now the standard V8; the 17-digit VIN's 8th digit identifies the engine.

1988–1991

- Renamed R/V Blazer while GMT400 pickups take the C/K name. NP241 transfer case (1988+).
- 1989: grille updated toward the GMT400 look. 1991: final year — the Tahoe replaces it for 1992.

VIN Decoding

1973–80 use the 13-character GM truck VIN; 1981–91 use the 17-digit standardized VIN with the engine as the 8th digit: T = 292 six, G/F/H = 305, P/L/M = 350, W = 454, Z = early diesel 350, C = 6.2L diesel. The SPID label in the glovebox is the final word on factory options — photograph it before it fades.

Engines

Engine	Years	Notes
307 V8	1973	Carryover small-block
305 V8	1976–91	Volume engine of the 1980s
350 V8	1973–91	Standard V8; TBI from 1987
400 V8	1973–80	Siamesed bores — watch cooling
454 V8	1973–mid-80s	Heavy-duty applications
6.2L diesel V8	1982–91	Naturally aspirated economy diesel

The 6.2L diesel and the CUCV connection

- The civilian 6.2 was built for fuel economy. The military M1009 CUCV is the same basic truck in olive drab — CUCV parts (24-volt electrical excepted) interchange freely and are a legitimate source for hard-to-find diesel hardware.
- Diesel restoration means the complete glow-plug system, vacuum-pump accessories, and diesel-specific cooling and fuel systems.

Reading Chevrolet casting and date codes

- Block casting number: driver's-side rear bellhousing flange. Assembly stamp: front passenger-side deck pad — month/day plus suffix.
- Decode casting number + date code + suffix together; the casting date should precede the truck's build date by weeks.