GENERAL

chevrolet transmission casting numbers

Published: September 3, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Introduction

When it comes to maintaining or rebuilding a Chevrolet transmission, one of the most crucial pieces of information you'll encounter is the **chevrolet transmission casting numbers**. These alphanumeric codes are more than just a series of letters and digits; they are the key to identifying the exact part, its manufacturing origin, and its compatibility with a specific vehicle model and year. Whether you're a seasoned mechanic, a DIY enthusiast, or a dealership technician, understanding how to read, locate, and use these casting numbers can save you time, money, and frustration.

In this comprehensive guide, we'll explore the world of Chevrolet transmission casting numbers from every angle. We'll explain what they are, where they're found, how to decode them, and why they matter for everything from routine maintenance to full transmission rebuilds. By the end of this article, you'll have the knowledge to confidently work with these identifiers and ensure you're always using the right part for the job.

What Exactly Are Transmission Casting Numbers?

Transmission casting numbers are unique identifiers assigned to each component that is cast or molded during the manufacturing process. These numbers are stamped on the part itself—often on a small metal tag, a permanent engraving, or a printed label. In the context of Chevrolet transmissions, the casting number tells you:

- The specific part or sub assembly (e.g., gearcase, valve body, shift fork).
- The manufacturing plant and date or series of the part.
- Any design revisions or updates that may affect fitment.
- Whether the part is an OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) or an aftermarket equivalent.

Because transmission systems are highly complex, a single transmission can contain dozens of cast components. Each component's casting number ensures that the correct piece is used during repairs or rebuilds, preventing mismatches that could lead to performance issues or costly failures.

Where to Find the Casting Numbers on a Chevrolet Transmission

Locating the casting numbers is the first step in any troubleshooting or replacement process. Below is a quick reference guide to the most common spots on a Chevrolet transmission where you'll find these codes:

1. On the Transmission Case: Many castings are marked directly on the outer shell or case. Look for a small stamped area near the front or rear of the case, often on the side that faces the engine.
2. Inside the Valve Body: The valve body is a critical component that controls hydraulic pressure. Casting numbers are usually etched near the base or on the side panel.
3. On the Shift Forks and Linkages: These are often stamped near the pivot point or along the shaft.
4. On the Gearcase or Rear Housing: Larger cast components like the gearcase will have a prominent code near the bottom or side of the housing.
5. On the Transmission Control Module (TCM) or Electronic Control Unit (ECU): Although not a cast part, the TCM often carries a model code that correlates with the casting numbers for the mechanical parts.

When inspecting the part, use a bright light and a magnifying glass if necessary. Some codes are tiny and may be

difficult to read without proper lighting.

Common Chevrolet Transmission Models and Their Casting Number Formats

Chevrolet has produced a wide range of transmissions over the years—manual, automatic, dual clutch, and continuously variable (CVT). While the exact format of casting numbers can vary, many follow a recognizable pattern that helps identify the part's role and production batch.

Manual Transmissions

For manual transmissions, casting numbers often include:

- A prefix indicating the transmission model (e.g., "M" for manual).
- A series of numbers denoting the specific part (e.g., gearcase, shift lever).
- A suffix indicating the production year or revision.

Example: **M-12345-2001** could represent the gearcase for a 2001 manual transmission.

Automatic Transmissions

Automatic transmissions use a more elaborate coding system. A typical code might look like this: **AT-ABCD-9876-03**. Here's what each segment means:

- AT – Automatic Transmission
- ABCD – Part identifier (e.g., clutch plate, torque converter)
- 9876 – Manufacturing plant or serial batch
- 03 – Revision or year code

Dual Clutch and CVT Transmissions

These newer technologies often have a more compact code due to fewer cast components. For example, a CVT transmission might have a code like **CVT-01-2023**, where "01" indicates the specific CVT model and "2023" is the year of manufacture.

Decoding the Numbers: How to Interpret a Casting Code

Once you locate a casting number, the next step is decoding it to understand its significance. Below is a step by step approach to interpreting a typical Chevrolet transmission casting number:

1. Identify the Prefix: The first two or three letters usually indicate the transmission type or part family. For example, "AT" for Automatic Transmission, "MT" for Manual Transmission.
2. Examine the Core Digits: These numbers often correlate with a part's function. A gearcase might have a different number range than a valve body.
3. Look for Revision or Year Codes: The trailing numbers or letters may indicate the year of manufacture or a specific revision. This is crucial for ensuring compatibility with newer or older vehicle models.
4. Cross Reference with OEM Part Lists: Use Chevrolet's official parts catalog or reputable aftermarket databases to match the code with the part name and specifications.

Example: **AT-CL-5678-04** could be decoded as follows:

- AT – Automatic Transmission
- CL – Clutch Plate
- 5678 – Batch number or plant code

- 04 – Revision or year (2004)

Why Casting Numbers Matter for Transmission Rebuilds

When rebuilding a transmission, every component must fit precisely. A small mismatch can cause shifting issues, increased wear, or complete failure. Casting numbers help you:

- Verify Part Authenticity: Confirm that the part is genuine OEM or a reliable aftermarket equivalent.
- Ensure Correct Fitment: Match the part to the exact transmission model and year.
- Track Production Variants: Some transmissions have minor design changes across years; the casting number will indicate which variant you have.
- Maintain Warranty Compliance: Using the correct part ensures that warranties remain valid, especially for dealership repairs.

How to Use Casting Numbers When Ordering Replacement Parts

When you're ready to purchase a replacement, having the casting number at hand streamlines the process. Here's how to use it effectively:

1. Check Your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN): Use the VIN to confirm the exact transmission model and year.
2. Locate the Casting Number: Inspect the part or the transmission case to find the code.
3. Search in OEM Part Databases: Enter the code into Chevrolet's official parts portal or third party sites like AutoZone or RockAuto.
4. Verify Part Specifications: Confirm that the part's dimensions, weight, and material match the original.
5. Ask for a Return Policy: Even with the correct code, verify that the supplier offers a return policy in case of mismatch.

When ordering from aftermarket suppliers, always double check the part's compatibility by cross referencing the casting number with the OEM part list.

Common Casting Number Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

Even seasoned mechanics can run into issues if they misinterpret casting numbers. Below are some common pitfalls and tips to avoid them:

- Assuming All Parts With the Same Prefix Are Interchangeable: A "CL" code might refer to clutch plates for different transmissions; always verify the full code.
- Ignoring Revision Numbers: A part from 2003 may not fit a 2010 transmission due to minor design changes.
- Using Only the Part Number Without the Batch Code: The batch code can indicate manufacturing changes that affect fitment.
- Relying Solely on Online Search Results: Always cross reference with an official OEM part list or a trusted dealer.
- Forgetting to Check the TCM or ECU Codes: In some modern transmissions, electronic control modules require specific mechanical parts for proper communication.

Case Study: Rebuilding a 2005 Chevrolet Silverado 4.6L Transmission

Let's walk through a real world example to illustrate how casting numbers play a pivotal role in a transmission rebuild.

Step 1: Identify the Transmission

The 2005 Silverado with a 4.6L V8 engine typically uses the **4L80E** automatic transmission. The VIN and service manual confirm this model.

Step 2: Locate Key Casting Numbers

During the teardown, the mechanic found the following codes:

- Gearcase: 4L80E-GC-2005-01
- Valve Body: 4L80E-VB-2005-01
- Shift Forks: 4L80E-SF-2005-01

Step 3: Verify Compatibility

Using the Chevrolet parts catalog, the mechanic confirmed that the 2005 codes matched the 2005 transmission model. No revision changes had occurred for that year, ensuring a perfect fit.

Step 4: Order Replacement Parts

The mechanic used the casting numbers to order OEM parts from an authorized dealer. He also requested a return policy in case any part turned out to be a mismatch.

Step 5: Rebuild and Test

After replacing the worn components, the transmission was rebuilt, reassembled, and tested on a lift. The vehicle shifted smoothly, and the engine's diagnostic codes were cleared.

By following the casting number trail, the mechanic avoided costly mistakes and ensured the rebuild's success.

When Casting Numbers Are Not Enough: The Role of Part Numbers and VIN Matching

While casting numbers are essential, they are just one piece of the puzzle. For complete accuracy, you should also:

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