

# AMC Engine codes -- ALL OF THEM!

*(By Frank Swygert, Publisher, "American Independent Magazine" (AIM))*

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All AMC engines were manufactured at the Kenosha Main plant, including the 55-56 AMC/Hudson engines. Blocks and some other castings were also done by one or more contractors specializing in such work.

## **Engine Code (serial number) Locations:**

121(2.0L) four cylinder engines have the code on the left side of the bell housing flange.

150 (2.5L) AMC/Jeep four cylinder engines have this number stamped on a machined pad on the right side of the block near where head and block come together between #3 and #4 cylinder, similar to the 199-258 six (no photo).

All 172-195.6 six cylinder engines (OHV and L-head, including aluminum OHV) have the code on a machined pad at the upper left corner of the block near where head and block come together. L-head shown below.

199-258 and 4.0L sixes have this number stamped on a machined pad on the right side of the block near where head and block come together between #2 and #3 cylinder. #3 spark plug shows in photo below.

First generation V-8s (1956-66 250/287/327) have the code stamped on a metal tag attached to the generator bracket. The bore size is cast into the left rear side of the block under the bell housing, which must be removed for positive ID.

This tag is attached to the front of the right (passenger side) valve cover of second and third generation V8 models. All second/third generation blocks should also have the engine size cast into them on each side between the freeze plugs behind the mounting plates in cars (Note: these are actually plugs in pouring holes necessary for casting, not holes for expansion of freezing water- they rarely come out if water freezes in the block, the block just cracks -- unless you are VERY lucky!).

**NOTE:** *This information does not apply to the Packard V8 or GM 151 four and 173 V6. Only the engine codes are given for these. Seek out Packard and GM information sources for information on these engines.*

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## OVER/UNDER SIZE CODE

**UP TO MID 1967:**

Some engines will have a second three letter code under or beside the serial number or Day Build Code. This code is used to indicate under and/or over size parts. All three letters will be present if any part was factory altered from original specifications. If .010 inch over or under would not correct the fit of the part(s), they were replaced. No engine was fitted from the factory with parts that were over .010 inch above or below standard.

The code represented the bore (1st letter), main bearings (2nd letter), and rod bearings (3rd letter). In any position, an "A" indicates standard size, "B" .010 inch undersize, and "C" .010 inch oversize.

The code is located directly below the serial number or Engine Day Build Code on 172-195.6 six cylinder engines, on the boss directly above the oil filter on 199-258 six cylinder and AMC built four cylinder engines, and on the valve cover tag on V8 engines.

**MID 1967 AND LATER:**

A different letter represents each part and the modification. The letter is located on the boss directly above the oil filter on six cylinder engines, on the valve cover tag on V8 engines. One or more letters may be present:

B- 0.010" oversize cylinder bore

C- 0.010" oversize camshaft bearing bore

M- 0.010" undersize connecting main bearings

P- 0.010" undersize connecting connecting rod bearings

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## ENGINE SERIAL NUMBERS

Prior to 1960 serial numbers beginning with a letter for engine size/type were used. Those are posted below from 1955-1959:

### Starting Engine Numbers, 1955-1959

1955 195.6 L-head, series 10 - H450001

1956 195.6 OHV, series 10 - S1001

1957 195.6 OHV, 1 bbl, series 10 - D341001

195.6 OHV, 2 bbl, series 10 - CB2001

250 V-8, series 20 - G7501

1958	195.6	L-head,	series	01	-	E101
	195.6	OHV, 1	bbl, series	10	-	B145001
	195.6	OHV, 2	bbl, series	10	-	CB9001
	250 V-8, series 20 - G24001					
1959	195.6	L-head,	series	01	-	E33001
	195.6	OHV, 1	bbl, series	10	-	B227001
	195.6	OHV, 2	bbl, series	10	-	CB36001
	250	V-8,	series	20	-	G34501
	327 V-8, series 80 - N32501					

Series 01 is the American, 10 Rambler Six, 20 Rebel, and 80 Ambassador.

## ENGINE DAY BUILD CODE

AMC used a the "Engine Day Build Code" as a serial number for all engines starting in 1960. This code gives the date the engine left the assembly plant fully running and has a code for the engine size/type.

NOTE: This code is NOT necessarily the same as found on the VIN. In some cases it is, but often the VIN code changed whereas the build code remained for any size engine.

An important thing to remember about AMC engines is that changes were made on a calendar year basis, not model year. The engine plant ran on its own schedule! This is why some 1980 model vehicles have the "heavy" 258 and others the "light" 258 -- changes were made early in calendar year 1980.

### The Engine Day Build Code consists of six characters:

1. Year built code
2. & 3. Number of the month
4. Engine size/type code
- 5 & 6. Day built

Thus, "409C21" indicates 1962, September, 195.6 OHV (cast iron), 21st day. The only way to determine the year is 1962 instead of 1971, 1984, or 1992 is to know that the 195.6 OHV engine was discontinued after 1965, and what a 195.6 looks like (very different than the 199/232/258). Most codes do not overlap very much. For those that do (such as 3 -- 1961, 1970, 1979, 1983, 1993) casting numbers may have to be consulted if the engine date is important, such as for a restoration.

## Day Built "Year Codes:"

1=1959	2=1960	3=1961	4=1962	5=1963
6=1964	7=1965	8=1966	9=1967	1=1968
2=1969	3=1970	4=1971	5=1972	6=1973
7=1974	8=1975	9=1976	1=1977	2=1978
3=1979				

Beginning in 1980 the last digit of the year is used (1980=0, 1981= 1, etc.)

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## Engine Size/Type Codes

**1960-1967:** AMC complicated things these years by using a different code in the VIN of each model for the same engine in at least 66 and 67. This confuses many sources! The codes below are used in the Engine Day Build Code, which is the same for all models. Serial number codes will be found with serial number decoding information. Years following code is the years the engines were available.

A- 195.6 1 bbl (60-65, L-head)

A- 199 1 bbl (66-67)

B- 195.6 (61-64, OHV aluminum, 1 or 2 bbl)

C- 195.6 OHV (61-65, OHV iron, 1 or 2 bbl)

D- 250 (60-61, 2 or 4 bbl)

E- 327 2 bbl (60-66)

F- 327 4 bbl (60-66)

G- 287 2 bbl (63-66)

H- 290 2 bbl (66-67)

J- 199 1 bbl (66-67)

L- 232 (64-67, 1 or 2 bbl)

N- 290 4 bbl (66-67)

Z- 343 4 bbl (67)

**1968-2001:** Someone at AMC decided to simplify things, or maybe the U.S. Government decided for them since engines now had to be qualified for emissions by type and size? In any case, all models used the same codes for the same engines.

Some codes were used for more than one engine. Year ranges are given for code use.

VIN and engine code numbers are different! This can be confusing. The 4.0 has an engine code of MX, but there are three different VIN codes (M, L, S). The earliest VIN code usually matches the engine code, later versions of the same engine may have different VIN codes but engine code usually remains the same.

A- 199 1 bbl (70)

A- 258 1 bbl (71-79)

B- 258 1 bbl Low Compression (71-74, Jeep ONLY)

B- 151 2 bbl (80-83, GM 2.5L)

B- 126 Diesel (85-87, Renault 2.1L, Jeep XJ ONLY)

C- 258 2 bbl (4.2L, 76-89)

E- 232 1 bbl (70-79)

F- 232 1 bbl Low Compression (71-74, Jeep ONLY)

F- 145 Diesel (81-86, Jeep ONLY)

G- 232 2 bbl (70-74)

G- 121 2 bbl (77-79)

H- 290 2 bbl (68-69)

H- 304 2 bbl (70-79)

J- 199 1 bbl (68-69)

L- 232 1 or 2 bbl (68-69)

M- 304 2 bbl Low Compression (71-74, Jeep ONLY)

MX- 242 MPI (4.0L MPFI, 86-01, Jeep ONLY)

N- 290 4 bbl (68-69)

N- 360 2 bbl (5.9L, 70-91)

P- 360 4 bbl (70-77)

R- 134 1 bbl (70, F-head, Jeep ONLY)

S- 343 2 bbl (68-69)

T- 134 1 bbl Low Compression (70, F-head, Jeep ONLY)

U- 150 (84-01, AMC 2.5L, Jeep & Eagle ONLY)

W- 390 4 bbl (68-69)

W- 173 2 bbl (84-86, GM 2.8L V6, Jeep XJ ONLY)

X- 390 (70)

Y- 390 (70 Machine)

Y- 318 MPI (93-96, Chrysler 5.2L, Jeep Grand Cherokee ONLY)

Z- 343 4 bbl (68-69)

Z- 401 (71-77)

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## 258

<b>AMC 258 I6</b>	
Bore x Stroke	3.75" x 3.90"
Displacement	258 (4.2L)
Compression Ratio	9.2:1
Horsepower (net)	112@3200
Torque (net)	210@2000
Main Bearings	7
Valve Configuration	OHV
Fuel	2bbl Carter BBD

The 258 used in '82-'86 CJs used a computer controlled Carter BBD. The computer controls mixture based on an O2 sensor and other sensors.

<b>AMC 258 I6</b>	
Bore x Stroke	3.75" x 3.90"
Displacement	258 (4.2L)
Compression Ratio	9.2:1
Horsepower (net)	115@3200
Torque (net)	210@1800
Main Bearings	7
Valve Configuration	OHV
Fuel	2bbl Carter BBD

The 258 used in '79-'81 CJs, some used a 1bbl carb and some used a 2bbl carb.

<b>AMC 258 I6</b>	
Bore x Stroke	3.75" x 3.90"
Displacement	258 (4.2L)
Compression Ratio	8.3:1
Horsepower (net)	110@3500
Torque (net)	195@2000
Main Bearings	7
Valve Configuration	OHV
Fuel	1bbl and 2bbl

The 258 used in '72-'78 CJs, J-series pickups, and Wagoneers, some used a 1bbl carb and lower compression than later 258s.

<b>AMC 258 I6</b>	
Bore x Stroke	3.75" x 3.90"
Displacement	258 (4.2L)
Compression Ratio	8.0:1
Horsepower (net)	110@3500
Torque (net)	195@2000
Main Bearings	7
Valve Configuration	OHV
Fuel	1bbl

The 258 was introduced in 1971 as the standard engine in J-series pickups and Wagoneers.

<b>AMC 258 I6</b>	
Bore x Stroke	3.75" x 3.90"
Displacement	258 (4.2L)
Compression Ratio	8.5:1
Horsepower (gross)	150@3800
Torque (gross)	240@1800
Main Bearings	7
Valve Configuration	OHV
Fuel	1bbl Carter or Holley

## 242

The 4.0L engine used in the Wrangler from '91 until the present.

<b>4.0L I6</b>	
Bore x Stroke	3.88" x 3.41"
Displacement	242 (4.0L)
Compression Ratio	8.8:1
Horsepower (net)	180@4750
Torque (net)	220@4000
Main Bearings	7
Valve Configuration	OHV
Fuel	MPI

The 4.0L I6 that is used in the XJ and ZJ is rated slightly higher than the YJ and TJ 4.0L engine probably due to a different exhaust system.

<b>4.0L I6</b>	
Bore x Stroke	3.88" x 3.41"
Displacement	242 (4.0L)
Compression Ratio	8.8:1
Horsepower (net)	185@4750
Torque (net)	220@4000
Main Bearings	7
Valve Configuration	OHV
Fuel	MPI