

TECHNICAL ALPHABET SOUP

MAKE	CHEVROLET	
VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	40837S	118201
		FINAL ASSEMBLY POINT
		ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: (Includes reimbursement for Federal Excise Tax & Suggested Dealer Delivery & Handling Charge) MODEL;		
0837	CORVETTE SPORT CPE	4252 00
Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Delivered Prices on Options and Accessories installed on this Vehicle by the Manufacturer		
2898GJ	LEATHER SADDLE TRIM	80 70
2936AA	ERMINÉ WHITE	00 00
2M20BA	4 SPD TRANSMISSION	188 30
2L84AA	375 HP V8 ENGINE	538 00
2G81AA	POSITRACT AXLE 308R	43 05
2P92AA	670X15 4 PLY WSW	31 85
2F40AA	SPL SUSPENSION EQ	37 70
2J65AD	METALLIC BRAKES	53 80
2N03DA	36.5 GAL GAS TANK	202 30
2U69BB	PB AM/FM RADIO	176 50
2A01AA	TINTED GLASS	16 15
2A31AA	POWER WINDOWS	59 20
2T86BB	BACK UP LAMPS	10 80

Alphabet Soup

MAKING SENSE OF MIDYEAR ECL CODES

JOHN HINCKLEY

One of the questions I get regularly, deals with ECL's (Exception Control Letters) – those two alpha characters suffixed to the option codes you see on the window sticker, tank sticker, Corvette Order, Car Shipper, and other pieces of original documentation, like C60AG; what do they mean, and why are they there? This isn't something I can explain in a couple of paragraphs, so I thought I'd write an article that covers it – not just the "what," but the "why" as well.

The ECL suffix that follows the trim code number on paperwork (and on St. Louis-bodied midyear trim tags) relates to which interior-affecting options were (or were not) on that particular car (color, headrests, shoulder belts,

manual or automatic transmission, power windows, hardtop, 36-gallon fuel tank, air conditioning, radio, etc.) when it was built. Noland Adams' 1963-1967 book breaks down these codes in the appendix following each

year's chapter, and the NCRS "Trim Tag Book" decodes them for midyears in great detail for determination of any St. Louis-bodied car's original as-built configuration, unless it had a black interior. I won't deal with Trim ECL's here – we'll look at the ECL's as they apply to individual options (RPO's).

WHY OPTION ECL'S? The answer is two words – "parts list." Let's imagine for the moment that you're the Material & Production Control Manager at St. Louis – the dealer orders come in to you, you order the parts required to build the cars, you determine

ALPHABET SOUP TECHNICAL

when and in what order the cars are produced, and you're responsible for managing the parts inventory so you don't run out of parts and don't have millions of dollars' worth of obsolete parts left at the end of the model year.

Do you just order huge quantities of each of the thousands of parts required to build all the possible configurations of Corvettes, watch trends, and order more of each part when they start to run low? Of course not - that would result in daily chaos, downtime, lost units, disaster at suppliers, premium transportation, chartered planes

You need to be able to forecast your parts requirements to suppliers far enough in advance so you have exactly the parts you need in the plant when the time comes to build each car, so you need a parts list for each car.

carrying expedited material, and an obsolete material nightmare at end-of-model-year inventory time. You need to be able to forecast your parts requirements to suppliers far enough in advance so you have exactly the parts you need in the plant when the time comes to build each car, so you need a parts list for each car. You can't issue 125 forecasts every day (one for each car), so you consolidate incoming orders into more convenient groups of 500. Then you analyze those 500 orders and break them down to part number level, call each group a "schedule," and issue the forecast for the parts required to build those 500

1 A typical '66 Corvette Dealer Order form; an "X" in the box next to each option showed what the customer wanted, but you couldn't generate a parts list for the car without applying the ECL coding for this particular combination of options.

2 A "Corvette Order Copy" generated by the computer after analyzing a Dealer Order, showing all the options and their ECL codes; with this data format, the computer can generate a parts list to build this car. Note the six-week span from "Date Received" to "Expected Date of Production."

1966 CORVETTE DEALER ORDER No. 34212

TO: CHEVROLET MOTOR DIVISION
PLEASE ENTER OUR CODES FOR ONE 1966 CORVETTE TO BE SHIPPED TO US AS SOON AS YOUR SCHEDULE PERMITS.

STOCK SOLD DATE 11-18-65

DEALER NAME: *Superior Motor Co.*
STREET ADDRESS:
CITY & STATE: *Croydon, Va.*

CUSTOMER NAME: *Brook*
DEALER SIGNATURE: *per H. Harrison*

MODEL	EXTERIOR COLOR	DESCRIPTION	Option No.	DESCRIPTION	CODE	TYPE	CONVERTIBLE TOP
X 19437-COUPÉ	MILANO MARON		988	BLACK	E	VINYL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WHITE <input type="checkbox"/> BLACK <input type="checkbox"/> BEIGE <input type="checkbox"/>
19467-CONVERTIBLE						LEATHER <input type="checkbox"/>	

OPTION DESCRIPTION	OPTION NO.	OPTION DESCRIPTION	OPTION NO.
POWERGLIDE (AVAILABLE WITH 300 H.P. ENGINE)	A135	SPECIAL PURPOSE FRONT & REAR SUSPENSION (AVAILABLE WITH 300 OR 435 H.P. ENGINES)	F41
3 SPEED FULLY SYNCHRONIZED (AVAILABLE WITH 300 H.P. ENGINE)	A110	FUEL TANK (REAR ONLY, 36 GAL. & WHEEL HOUSE FILLER PANEL)	M02
4 SPEED - Wide Range (AVAILABLE WITH 300, 350, OR 435 H.P. ENGINES)	M120	HIGHWAY EMERGENCY KIT	M23
4 SPEED - Close Ratio (AVAILABLE WITH 300, 350 OR 435 H.P. ENGINES)	M121	CAL. AIR INJECTION REACTOR (CALIFORNIA VEHICLE REGISTRATION ONLY) (AVAILABLE WITH 300, 350 OR 435 H.P. ENGINES)	K19
H.D. 4 SPEED - Close Ratio (NOT RECOMMENDED FOR GENERAL USE) (AVAILABLE WITH 435 H.P. ENGINE)	M122	HAZARD WARNING SWITCH	V74
300 H.P. & 8 BL. CARB. - Hydraulic Lifters (AVAILABLE WITH 300 OR 435 H.P. ENGINES)	L79	OFF ROAD EXHAUST (AVAILABLE WITH ALL ENGINES WITH 3 OR 4 SPEED)	N11
350 H.P. LARGE 4 BL. CARB. - Hydraulic Lifters (AVAILABLE WITH 400 OR 435 H.P. ENGINES)	L79	SIDE MOUNTED DUAL EXHAUST (Off Road Service)	N14
390 H.P. LARGE 4 BL. CARB. - Hydraulic Lifters (AVAILABLE WITH 400 OR 435 H.P. ENGINES)	L79	BRAXES, HEAVY DUTY DISC (AVAILABLE WITH 300 OR 435 H.P. ENGINES)	J56
435 H.P. LARGE 4 BL. CARB. - Mechanical Lifters (AVAILABLE WITH 400 OR 435 H.P. ENGINES)	L72	IGNITION SYSTEM (FULL TRANSISTOR) (AVAILABLE WITH 300, 350 OR 435 H.P. ENGINES)	K66
POSTTRACTION 3.08 TO 1 (AVAILABLE WITH 3 SPD., OR 400 & 300 H.P.; 400 OR 435 & 390 H.P.; 400 & 435 H.P.)	G81	RADIO, AM-FM (INCLUDES POWER REAR ANTENNA)	U69
POSTTRACTION 3.36 TO 1 (AVAILABLE WITH 3 SPD., OR 400 & 300 H.P.; 400 & 350 H.P.; 400 OR 435 & 390 H.P.; 400 OR 435 H.P.)	G81	SOFT RAY WINDSHIELD ONLY	A02
POSTTRACTION 3.55 TO 1 (AVAILABLE WITH 400 & 300 H.P.; 400 & 350 H.P.; 400 OR 435 H.P.)	G81	SOFT RAY ALL WINDOWS	A01
POSTTRACTION 3.70 TO 1 (AVAILABLE WITH 400 & 300 H.P.; 400 & 350 H.P.; 400 OR 435 H.P.)	G81	SPECIAL CAST ALUMINUM WHEELS	P48
POSTTRACTION 4.11 TO 1 (AVAILABLE WITH 400 & 300 H.P.; 400 & 350 H.P.)	G81	GENUINE WOOD STEERING WHEEL	N32
POSTTRACTION 4.56 TO 1 (AVAILABLE WITH 400 & 435 H.P.)	G81	TELESCOPIC STEERING SHAFT	N36
POWER STEERING	P140	AIR CONDITIONING (AVAILABLE WITH 300, 390 OR 435 H.P. ENGINES)	C60
POWER BRAKES	.90	HEATER & DEFROSTER DELETION (NOT AVAILABLE WITH AIR CONDITIONING)	C46
WHITE SIDEWALL 7.75 x 15-4 PR. (THINLINE STYLE)	F92	REMOVABLE HARD TOP (2IN. FLANGE OF SOFT TOP - 1947 MODEL)	C07
NYLON BLACKWALL 7.75 x 15-4 PR. (GOLD STRIPS)	T01	REMOVABLE HARD TOP (2IN. ADDITION TO SOFT TOP - 1947 MODEL)	C07
		HEADRESTS (DRIVER & PASSENGER)	A82
		POWER WINDOWS (ELECTRICAL CONTROLS)	A31

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE ZONE
PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE THIS ORDER WILL BE PLACED WITH THE PLANT FOR PRODUCTION IN THE MONTH OF

1 1ST COPY WHITE ZONE OFFICE FILE
2ND COPY YELLOW ASSEMBLY PLANT FILE COPY

3RD COPY GREEN ZONE OFFICE TO BE RETURNED TO DEALER
4TH COPY BLUE DEALER FILE COPY

CHEVROLET MOTOR DIVISION

Corvette Order Copy

Ident. No.	Date Received	Exp. Date of Prod.	Order Number	Zone No.	Dealer	COPO/F&SO
824026	05-18-67	06-30-67	67561	703	663	

Model: 19437 CORVETTE SPT CPE Point: 02900AA TUXEDO BLACK

Equip. Code	Option No.	Type	Description
	83TD TM	Trim	BLACK TRIM
	02L71AA	Engine	435 HP V8 TURBOJET
	02K66DA	Air Con.	
	02G81PA	Transistor Ign.	TRANSISTOR IGN
	02M21AA	Axle	POSTTRACT AXLE 4.11R
		Transmission	4 SPD CL RATIO TRAN
		Tires	
		Conv. Top	
		Aux. Top	
	02U69HA	Radio	PB AM/FM RADIO
		Comfort & Con.	
	02A01AA		TINTED GLASS
	02N14AE		SIDE DUAL EXHAUST

2

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cars to your suppliers about a month ahead of time. Analyzing those 500 orders and breaking them down to the part number level for procurement is the key to the system, and the ECLs for the options on those cars (and the computer) take care of that job.

The computer already knows exactly, down to the last part number, what's required to build a "base car" – a coupe or convertible with a base engine, three-speed transmission, standard non-posi rearend, black vinyl

The computer already knows exactly, down to the last part number, what's required to build a "base car" – a coupe or convertible with a base engine, three-speed transmission, standard non-posi rearend, black vinyl interior, black soft top, with a heater, blackwall tires, and no radio. That's all the parts shown in UPC 0 through UPC 14 in the Assembly Manual, and it's the base from which the computer works.

interior, black soft top, with a heater, blackwall tires, and no radio. That's all the parts shown in UPC 0 through UPC 14 in the Assembly Manual, and it's the base from which the computer works. Every option ordered on the car adds parts unique to that option, and in most cases, deletes "base car" parts they replace. Further, different combinations of other options on the same car can result in different part numbers being required for any one option; this is where developing a parts list for each car gets complicated, and it's where the ECLs come into play. When the dealer order was accepted for production by the plant, their computer analyzed each order for each option specified (like air conditioning, for example), checked for other options that would change the parts required for air conditioning on that particular

car (like optional engines, transmission type, coupe or convertible, etc.), and assigned an ECL to each option based on each individual car's ultimate configuration.

WHERE DID THOSE ECLS COME FROM? Engineering had already developed a detailed parts list for a base air conditioning system and parts lists for air conditioning with every conceivable combination of other options that could affect it; each possible combination was assigned an ECL code, and the parts required for that combination were released against those ECL codes.

There were twelve possible combinations of air conditioning, with a unique parts list for each, depending on body style, engine type, and transmission type, so there were twelve possible ECL codes to be suffixed on the "C60" option code (and every other option on that car also had pre-determined ECL combinations assigned depending on how they were affected by other options on that same car).

There were twelve possible combinations for air conditioning in 1967, based on engine, transmission, and body style, each of which had its own ECL and generated a different detail parts listing for the car. Just "C60" wouldn't generate a correct

There were twelve possible combinations for air conditioning in 1967, based on engine, transmission, and body style, each of which had its own ECL and generated a different detail parts listing for the car.

parts list. Why? Coupes got a tinted back window, and convertibles didn't. Small-blocks and big-blocks got different compressor brackets, pulleys, belts, refrigerant hoses, fasteners, wire harnesses, fans, and radiator seals. Powerglide cars got different vacuum hoses and fittings than four-speed cars. Big-block cars got motor mount shims and different front springs. Big-block Powerglide cars got a unique offset front license plate bracket.



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AB	Conv. with base engine and manual trans.	247
AC	Conv. with base engine and M35	335
AG	Coupe with base engine and manual trans.	343
AH	Coupe with base engine and M35	486
AL	Conv. with L79	336
AM	Coupe with L79	444
BA	Conv. with L36 and manual trans.	298
BB	Coupe with L36 and manual trans.	408
BC ¹⁷	Conv. with L36 and M35	138
BD ¹⁷	Coupe with L36 and M35	229
BG	Conv. with L68 and manual trans.	199
BH	Coupe with L68 and manual trans.	325
Total 1967 C60 production		3,788

This option not available with L71 or L88.

CHEVROLET MOTOR DIVISION 53 277 **Corvette Order** 7

Ident. No.	Date Received	Exp. Date of Prod.	Order Number	Zone No.	Dealer	COPO/F&SO
806866	10-18-66	12-23-66	17662	04	715	
Model	Paint		Prod. Seq. No.			
19437	CORVETTE SPT CPEV	02986AA SILVER PEARL				

Equip. Code	Option No.	Type	Description
	2STD TM	Trim	BLACK TRIM
	02L71AA	Engine	435 HP V8 TURBOJET
	02K66CA	Air Con.	
	02G81NA	Transistor Ign.	TRANSISTOR IGN EC
	02M21AA	Axle	POSITRACT AXLE 370R
		Transmission	4 SPD CL RATIO TRAN
		Tires	
		Conv. Top	
		Aux. Top	
	02U69GA	Radio	PB AM/FM RADIC
		Comfort & Con.	

301

H

Engine Number

T101TJE

3 The twelve different ECLs for C60 air conditioning, driven by body style, engines, and transmissions; each one generated a different parts list for air conditioning for that particular car. (Courtesy Noland Adams)

4 Another "Corvette Order", showing a five-week span from the order receipt to the expected production date. Note the rubber-stamped "53 277" at the top - 53 is the "schedule" number, and 277 is the position of this order in that 500-unit schedule.

THE "CORVETTE ORDER": When the computer finished analyzing each dealer order, it generated a "Corvette order" for each car, listing all the options, each with its own ECL suffix. When that car's listing was entered into the procurement computer (via IBM punchcards in that era), it generated a complete, down-to-the-last-detail parts list for that individual car, with every single part number and quantity required to build it, including paint, sealers, adhesives, lubricants, and protective coatings.

In order to forecast a 500-unit "schedule" to suppliers, the procurement computer consolidated those 500 Corvette Orders, generated the parts list required to build all 500 of them, broke the list down by supplier of each part, and issued the requirements to the suppliers. That's why there's a time span between the "Order Received" date on the Corvette order and the "Expected Date of Production." The orders had to be analyzed, broken down to part number level, consolidated into a "schedule," forecasted to the suppliers, and the parts produced and shipped to St. Louis, so they were available when the car came down the line.

When the sequence in which those 500 units would be built was decided, the Production Control computer generated a listing of those units numbered from 1 to 500; those numbers became the "Body Shop Job Numbers," which are found scrawled in grease pencil in various places

The ECLs, developed and pre-assigned by Engineering for every possible combination and cross-combination of options, enabled this task to be computerized and brought a semblance of order out of what otherwise would have been chaos. Assembly is a VERY complex business.

on the raw fiberglass underbody, cowl & dash, doors, coupe roofs, and front and rear clip.

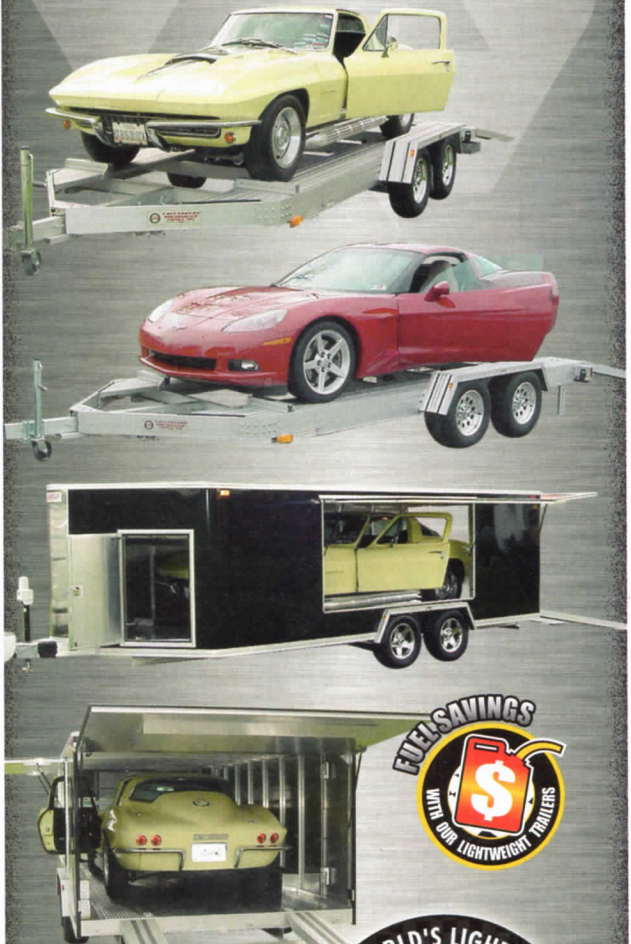
Converting the dealer orders (which only specified "air conditioning," not which one of the twelve possible varieties of air conditioning was required) into detail parts lists (with all the other options broken down the same way to the part number level as well) and consolidating 500 orders into "schedules" for forecasting would be an impossible task to do manually. The ECLs, developed and pre-assigned by Engineering for every possible combination and cross-combination of options, enabled this task to be computerized and brought a semblance of order out of what otherwise would have been chaos. Assembly is a VERY complex business.

WHERE TO FIND OPTION ECL CODES: The two-character ECL codes started in 1963. For midyears, you'll find them in Noland Adams' *Complete Corvette Restoration & Technical Guide, Volume II, 1963-1967*. In the "Option" section in each year's chapter, each individual option listing has a header at the beginning that lists and describes all the ECL's that were assigned by Engineering to that option, along with the quantity of each that were actually built.

I'm not aware of any published listing or decoding of the ECL's that were assigned to the options on 1968-up Corvettes; developing that would be a massive research project. ■

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