

CORVETTE VIN IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

Generation	Years	VIN Length	Key VIN Identifiers (Highlights)
C1	1953–1962	10–13	Serial only — no standardized VIN. Check engine suffix codes + frame tags.
C2	1963–1967	13	1st digit = GM division (3), next 4 = series/model/year, last 8 = serial number
C3	1968–1981	13	1st = 1 (Chevy), 2nd–3rd = body style (94 = Corvette), 6th = model year (A=1980)
	1981–1982	17 (NHTSA)	10th digit = model year, 11th = plant (S = St. Louis, 5 = Bowling Green)
C4	1984–1996	17	5th–8th = Engine/Model: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Y = Base, Z = ZR-1• 1YY07 = Coupe• 1YY67 = Convertible
C5	1997–2004	17	8th = Engine (G = LS1, S = LS6) 10th = Year (V=1997, W=1998...) 11th = Plant (5 = Bowling Green)
C6	2005–2013	17	1G1YY = Coupe, 1G1YE = Z06 8th = Engine (U = LS2, E = LS3, E/Z = LS7, E/Z = LS9)
C7	2014–2019	17	8th = Engine (Y = LT1, T = LT4, R = LT5) Model: 1YY07 = Coupe, 1YY67 = Convertible
C8	2020–Now	17	1G1Y = Corvette 8th = Engine (Y = LT2, E = LT6 for Z06) 10th = Year (L=2020, M=2021...) Z51: Check RPO sticker

Maintenance Red Flags Checklist

Danny's no-BS list of the top warning signs you've gotta catch before you write a check. Tick 'em off as you inspect—and don't say I didn't warn you.



General Corvette Red Flags (All Gens)

Frame or Birdcage Rust

Why it matters: Structural rot can cost more than the car itself.

Danny's shop story: "Had a '65 come in once—looked clean 'til I pulled the carpet. Frame was swiss cheese. I told him, 'Buddy, this ain't a Corvette, it's a corroded coffin.'"

Oil & Coolant Leaks

Where: Valve cover gaskets, oil pan, water pump, radiator hoses.

Action: Pressure-test cooling system; peek under the car after it's sat for a day.

Telltale Electrical Gremlins

Symptoms: Flickering gauges, dead dome lights, radio static.

Fix: Check grounds, clean connectors, look for DIY wiring hacks that scream "cheap fix."

Suspiciously Fresh Paint or Mismatched Panels

Bullsh*t indicator: Sloppy overspray, different shade under trim.

Why: Could be covering crash damage or rust repair.



C1–C3 ('53–'82) Vintage Quirks

6-Volt Electrical System Failures ('53–'55)

Symptom: Dim lights, slow starter cranking.

Tip: Up-graded 12-volt conversions exist—check if it's been done right.

Carburetor Tuning Issues

Watch for: Hard starting, bogging under load.

Do: Bring a spare clean-up kit and tune it on the spot.

Vacuum-Operated Headlight Linkage (C3)

Fail sign: Pop-up lamps that don't pop.

DIY beware: Aftermarket fixes often break before you get home.



C4–C5 ('84–'04) Electronic & Ignition Gotchas

Cross-Fire Injection ('84–'85)

Red flag: Poor throttle response, hesitation.

Action: Swap to Holley or tune the factory system properly.

Optispark Distributor Fail ('92–'96)

Symptom: Misfires under load, rough idle.

Fix: Check for recall updates; upgrade to aftermarket unit.

4+3 Transmission "Chunk Shift" ('84–'89)

Feel: Gear-hunt between thirds.

Tip: Many owners have swapped to 6-speed; ask about the service history.

Steering Column Lock Recall ('97–'99 C5)

Check: Does the key ever get stuck?

Recall: Ensure it was performed—or budget for a new lock assembly.



C6–C7 ('05–'19) Performance-Era Pitfalls

LS7 Valve-Guide Wear (Early Z06 '06–'07)

Sound: Ticking under light load.

Pre-flight: Ask if any engines have had guides replaced under warranty.

8-Speed Torque-Converter Shudder ('14–'16 C7 Automatic)

Symptom: Hesitation/rattle at low speed.

DIY: Often fixed with fluid flush; check service records.

Cracked Wheels (C7 Z06/GS)

Inspect: Look for hairline fractures near spokes.

Recall: GM reimbursed some owners—ask for receipts.

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Maintenance Red Flags Checklist (continued)



C8 ('20–Present) Modern-Tech Watchouts

DCT Transmission "Chatter" (Early C8s)

Feel: Clunky shifts below 20 mph.

Tip: Verify software updates and fluid change history.

Frunk Latch & Fit-Finish Issues (2020)

Scope: Dent-in-place panels, misaligned bodywork.

Check: Open/close hood and doors in the lot before you buy.

Carbon Buildup on Direct-Injection Engines

Symptom: Rough idle over time.

Service: Ask if they've done walnut-blasting or intake cleaning.



Final

Danny Tip:

"Start with the cleanest car in the worst spot—'cause if it passes a sketchy driveway inspection, it'll breeze through anything else."