

# It's all about the NUMBERS.....

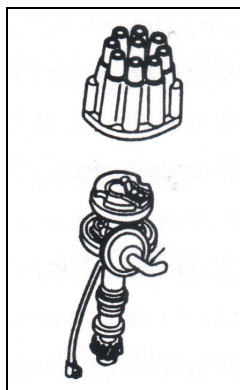
Numbers matching. How many times have you heard that statement? Do you know what it means?

When cars are assembled nearly all components have numbers to identify them. Example: manifolds and rear ends have casting numbers. Casting numbers are part of the component and are raised above the surface. Other components such as alternators and carbs have stamped numbers. The stampings are made by pressing into the component after the part is made. Some components like engine blocks and heads have both casting numbers and stamped numbers.

Engineering orders are what tells the assembler which parts to use. The engineers determine what amp alternator is needed based on the options you order. If your car has rear defrost, power windows and locks, it will need a higher amp alternator than a stripped down, no option car. Certain cylinder heads have bigger valves and those would be used on performance cars. Some engines with options like air conditioning were de-tuned and use a slightly smaller valve so enough power is available to keep the A/C working. The engineers make all these decisions for assembly.

Back to the numbers.....

Many components have date codes. These parts should fall within a few weeks prior to the assembly date code stamped into the Fisher Body tag. The date code on this tag (for all years of H/O's) is designated by a 3 digit code (2 numbers and a letter). Example: 11B is November (11<sup>th</sup> month), 2<sup>nd</sup> week.



BODY BY FISHER				
ST	73-3AG37	LAN	123456	BODY
TR	940 A51		19 - 19	PAINT
	04C			

**GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION  
CERTIFIES TO THE DEALER THAT THIS  
VEHICLE CONFORMS TO ALL U.S. FEDERAL  
MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS  
APPLICABLE AT THE TIME OF MANUFACTURE**

**EXAMPLE:**

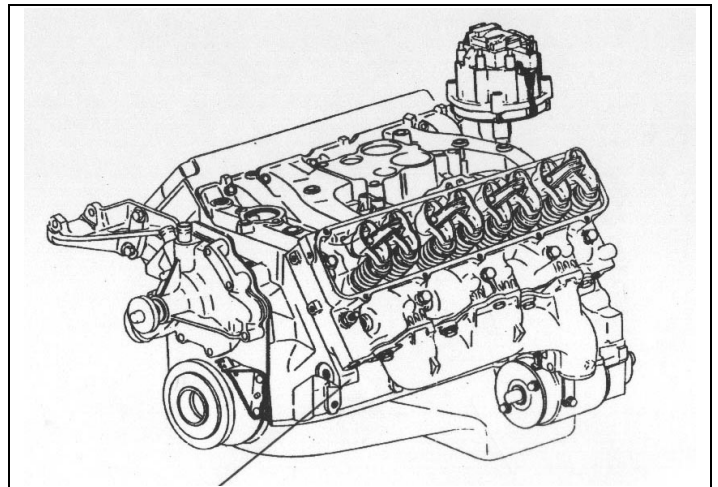
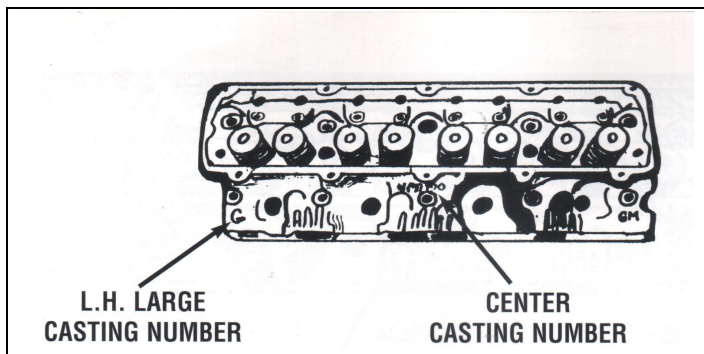
73 ..... Model Year (1973)  
 3 ..... General Motors Division (Oldsmobile)  
 AG ..... Series (Cutlass S)  
 37 ..... Style (2-Door Hardtop Coupe)  
 LAN ..... Assembly Plant (Lansing, MI)  
 123456 ..... Production Sequence  
 940 ..... Trim Code (Black Vinyl)  
 A51 ..... Seat Type Code  
 19 ..... Lower Body Color (Ebony Black)  
 19 ..... Upper Body Color (Ebony Black)  
 04C ..... Build Date (April, 3rd week)

Not all date codes are done like this, that would be too easy! Some codes are by the day of the year. Example: November 9 would be 313 for the number of days since the beginning of the calendar year (or 314 if it was a leap year). This type of code is found on carbs.

Another type of coding would be 2K15, for November 15, 1972. 2 is for 1972, K is the 11<sup>th</sup> month (11<sup>th</sup> letter of the alphabet), and 15 is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. This style can be found on distributors. Just to confuse us sometimes it would be K215. It de-codes the same, they just switch it around.

Casting numbers were also used as the part number, but not always. Again, that would have been too easy. Casting numbers are usually large and easy to read. Cylinder heads on a big block engine are usually referred to with a single letter, example "C" or "D", etc. The small block engine used a number

and some had a number and a letter. In addition they also had an area with 6 or more numbers that were sometimes the part number. This was sometimes in the center and sometimes split in between the ports.



Are you beginning to get the idea about “numbers matching”?

YEAR H/O	ENG	HEAD	
1968-1969	455	C	394548
		D	400370
1972	455	Ga	409100
1973-1975	455	J	411783
1974-1975	350	8	411929
1979	350	3A	544 716
1983-1984	307	5A	3317

Now you have to consider the “exceptions”, besides engineering orders. The 1968 and 1969 H/O’s were built quickly at the end of the model year. Engineering orders called for the cars with A/C to have “C” heads and the non-A/C cars to have “D” heads. Also remember the GM Corporation did not allow the big 455 engine to be installed in the Cutlass body until 1970. These cars were to be built off site, BUT, there was no facility at Demmer (where the Hurst conversions were done) to install engines. The solution was a “quick” installation on a side assembly line at Oldsmobile prior to going to Demmer. “Quick” is the operative word! The engines were installed in the cars quickly without attention to engineering orders. It was not unusual to have an air conditioned car with “D” heads and vice versa.

The factory also added the VIN (vehicle identification number) or part of it, to some components. They usually used 9 digits. All Hurst/Olds were built at the Lansing, MI assembly plant, and the VIN indicates that with an “M”. These stampings would read as follows: 32M123456. 3(Olds Division); 2 (1972); M Lansing, MI; 123456, (the last 6 digits of the VIN). This portion of the VIN was stamped into the frame. Usually on the left side rear, but not always.) The engine block is stamped on the driver side and to the front. (See diagram.) Transmissions are also stamped like this.

Another exception is human error. After all, we all make mistakes!

Next time you hear “numbers matching”, consider what that means. It doesn’t necessarily mean all original, as it came off the line. The person saying it may not have a clue as to what all that involves. They may be referring to the major parts like the engine and transmission, only. A true original numbers matching car is rare.

Enjoy your H/O, whatever their numbers.

