

# Early Econolines 101

For new players in the sport of old cars and trucks, "square one" is finding & joining/subscribing to a national club/publication devoted to the specific marquee (e.g., Econoline) of your collectible vehicle. "Square two" is finding & reading one issue of Hemmings Motor News (HMN) which is a 900+ page plain brown paper covered monthly \$5 magazine containing (mostly) automotive related classifieds which encompass the entire automotive spectrum. Basic coverage categories are: **Events & Auctions** (automotive swap meets, auctions, etc.), **Literature** (original sales, owners handbooks, shop manuals, etc.), **Services** (repair & restoration of entire vehicles, radios, steering wheels, dash pads, master cylinders, upholstery, etc.), **Vehicles and Parts** (for sale/trade/wanted), **Supplies, Tools, & Automobilia** (rust & paint removers, tools, toys, models, videos, etc.).

New players in the 61-67 Econoline experience should know that Ford's Lorain OH assembly plant produced 544,335 first generation Econolines between October 1960 and October 1967. 52,121 61-67 Econolines were Pickups, 492,214 had Van bodies, and 91,216 of the Window Vans had rear passenger seats and were marketed as Falcon Buses/Wagons. 3,773 1965 Econoline pickups, vans, & Falcon Station Buses were sold to the U.S. Armed Forces. Early Econolines were only marketed in the U.S. and Canada. Canadian Ford-Monarch dealers sold Ford Econolines, and Canadian Lincoln-Mercury dealers sold 61-65 Mercury Econolines. Both were nearly identical to the US versions, but Mercury Econolines had Mercury lettered cowl and van rear cargo door emblems, and "mercury" letters were embossed on pickup tailgates. During the 61 model year only Econoline pickups were available as Mercury's because the 61 Canadian Mercury vans and buses were English Ford Thames models. 1965 was the last model year of Canadian Mercury Econoline Produc-

tion. The last six embossed characters on the first line of the U.S. patent plate (i.e., the VIN tag affixed to the 61/62 drivers door frame opening, or 63/67 drivers door rear edge) are model year production serial numbers which identify the production calendar year and month.

**EconO.** The Early Econoline Organization (510-352-4367 or [polecatt1010@hotmail.com](mailto:polecatt1010@hotmail.com)), 15039 Costela Street, San Leandro CA 94579, was founded in 1987 by Jay Long & Brain Cochran. Every three or more years Jay still occasionally publishes an issue of the **EconO Newsletter** which contains the most definitive 61-67 Econoline technical & historical articles available. **EconO Newsletters** are only published whenever enough new information accumulates. For \$10 in US funds (plus postage differential to other countries), Jay provides a current six issue set of published, and yet to be published, issues, and an **EconO** decal to subscribers who provide all their VIN Tag's embossed data. Five postpaid six back issue sets (1-6, 7-12, 13-18, 19-24, 25-30) are available at \$10 per set.

**Something Econoline Quarterlies (SEQ)** are 12 page low tech periodicals published by **EconO Newsletter** charter subscriber Don English, ([don@mooteck.net](mailto:don@mooteck.net) or 619-435-6784), 301 Alameda Blvd, Coronado CA 92118-1134. Early Econoline owners recorded as one of the year's EconO meet attendees (even without their Econoline), are provided one unsolicited issue of SEQ. Before annual renewal is required, four free issues are sent to owners who have: (1) Provided Don, by email, postcard, or phone, with their postal address. (2) Once sent all three lines of their VIN tag's embossed characters to either Don, or to [oldeconolines@yahoo.com](mailto:oldeconolines@yahoo.com) for decoding. (3) Requested annual distribution. For \$15 postpaid (i.e., at cost), Don also sells Xeroxed sets of all the Ford Truck Parts Catalog Illustrations (over 125 pages) applicable to 61-67 Econolines.

**2004 U.S. EconO Meets:** **EconO West**, Pasadena CA SAT APR 10. **EconO Carlisle** PA FRI-SUN JUN 4-6 (SAT 5th main EconO meet). **Mid West EconO Fest Invitational Picnic**, Burlington WI SUN AUG 8. **EcoNorthwest** Portland OR, SUN AUG.15. **EconO Mid South**, Petit Jean State Park AR SEP 5. **EconO Southeast**, Plant City FL SAT OCT 23. SEQ contains both fliers for next quarters EconO meets, along with attendance lists and snapshots of last quarter's meets...

**1961:** (>100000). Only the Econoline Pickup, (Delivery) Van, and Station Bus, models were produced and all had two speed wipers, black steering wheels, a 144 cubic inch straight six engine mounted on two cantilevered arms, a non synchronized low three speed light duty manual transmission, and a 2300 lb. Capacity light duty rear axle having 7" ring and pinion gears with 3.50:1 or 4.00:1 ratios. The VIN tag had an aluminum border around its outer edge and was mounted on the forward portion of the body opening for the driver's front door. All the 61 VIN tag's embossed Model Code data erroneously identifies MAX G.V.W. categories rather than distinguishing between Van, Pickup, and Bus models. Most pre 63 VIN tags lacked either a field, or any related data, for body type identification. The Station Bus had rear body side, and front & rear cargo door windows together with floor mounted fixtures for two optional rear bench seats. An optional "Window Van" version of the Station Bus was available but lacked any provisions for optional rear bench seats. Pickup rear quarter windows were optional equipment, as were: bright metal (vice the standard 1961 white plastic) interior door & window handles, armrests, windows in the cargo doors of "regular" vans, a glove box door, a drivers door outside lock, a black dash pad, and a fixed front passenger seat.

**1962:** (>205000). The embossed

VIN tag data in the Model blocks of vans & pickups were now correctly shown as Series codes E14 and E10. A 170 cid engine, together with a 7.25" ring & pinion light duty integral carrier type rear axle, became optional as did two speed wipers. Limited production started on "Display Van" bodies (windows in passenger side and back cargo doors, but rear bodyside windows only on the passenger side), and a "Cargo Van" having both right and left side cargo doors, i.e., an "eight door". All window vans capable of carrying rear passengers were now marketed as Falcon "Extra Duty (Station) Wagons" and were available in Station Bus (E11 Series), Club Wagon (E12 Series), interior trim levels and Deluxe Club Wagon (E13 Series) with deluxe interior & exterior, trim levels. All had Falcon chrome script emblems on one of the rear cargo doors and on both front doors, where they replaced the normal Econoline script emblems. .

**1963:** (>325000). The VIN tag no longer had an aluminum border and now correctly contained fields (blocks) and data for Model and Body/Type codes. Late in the model year a four speed manual "Dagenham" transmission, and a 4850 lb. Maximum Gross Vehicle Weight package (one ton load capacity) which included a heavy duty 9" ring and pinion removable carrier type rear axle became available as an E160 model Van and as an E150 model Pickup. The drivers door outside lock became standard.

**1964:** (>44500). The embossed data that now appeared in the Body Code fields of 64-67 VIN tags now commenced with a one character soft trim code, and ended with the first two digits of the Body codes for vans (89) or pickups (87). Because the body field lacked enough space to include it, the "Type Body" Codes were therefore left off of 64-67 VIN tags. Max GVW Pickups and Vans were no longer identified as E150 and E160 models. A "four door" Panel without any bodyside

opening cargo doors became available as the E150 model and a "C4" automatic transmission was optional with the also optional 170 cid engine, and a glove box finally became standard equipment.

**1965:** (>580000). The 144 engine, and the 4 speed manual Dagenham transmission were discontinued. The 170 engine replaced the discontinued 144 engine as the standard engine, and a 240 six cylinder engine package, which included a stronger manual three speed transmission and a 2780 lb. 9" rear axle, was optional. The engine enclosure ("the doghouse") was enlarged (it's now slightly longer and higher) to accommodate the larger 240 engine. The two engine mounting arms were replaced by 170 and 240 version tubular engine mounting cross members. An optional 18" rear body extension became optional for van bodies (only), and some of which had both Supervan and Econoline chrome front door emblems. Extended Panel Vans were designated E170 models and all the non-Falcon Window, Display, Regular, and Eight Door Vans were designated E160 models.

**1966:** (>732000). The VIN tag was redesigned to be about a third longer and narrower and was relocated to the back edge of the drivers front door. Tag colors now identified the type of paint used: "grey" plates indicated non-acrylic enamel, and "black" tags identified acrylic enamel. Electric windshield washers, emergency flashers, a dash pad, a padded glove box door, seat belts, and a fresh air heater/defroster, became standard equipment. The optional extended van body became available for the E11 series Falcon Wagons. The Station Bus name was discontinued and replaced by the E11 series Club Wagon title, and the previous middle of the Falcon Econoline series E12 Club Wagon model was re-titled E12 series Custom Club Wagon.

**1967:** (>A00000). A dual master

cylinder, backup lights, and two speed wipers, became standard equipment items, and a shoulder (vice safety) belt became optional.

**Early Econoline Toys** once made by Tootsietoy, Nylint, and Froby, are the most widely still available. Various firms in the orient, such as MARX & Tomy, also produced early Econoline toys and models, but not enough of these were imported to be commonly available in North America. Tootsietoy made a crude & ugly version of the five window pickup, Froby produced 1:43 scale (about 4" long) die cast Econoline pickup, van, and club wagon models during 1994 (only), while Nylint made over a dozen "Tonka" type heavy gauge steel pickups and vans. Used versions of these can be found at swap meets, toy shows, and in toy collecting magazines. Neil Mc Elwee's Toy Truck Collectors Guide #6 illustrates and describes most all of the Nylint Econoline toys produced.

**Econoline Ford Literature.** Original copies of 61-67 Econoline Ford Literature (sales folders, owners handbooks, shop manuals, etc.) can often be found on the internet's Ebay.Motors auction site. Other sources are Automotive Literature vendors advertising in HMN, and/or literature vendors at Automotive Swap Meets. Prices for original automotive literature are dependent upon rarity, condition, and the avareice of individual vendors. Owners handbooks for 61-63 Econolines contain actual photos, while the 64-67 owners handbooks mostly display line drawings. NORS (reproduction) copies of 61 thru 67 Econoline shop manuals are presently advertised at \$25-\$45, and \$15 for a 62, or 63, or 64 model year supplements to the 61 shop manual. Ford produced individual 62, 63, & 64 supplements to the 61 shop manual rather than completely revised annual manuals. \$30 CD copies of a combined set of 61-62-63-64 Econoline Shop Manuals are advertised at the internet's Ebay.Motors site.



Except for "obsolete and production only" parts, the 57-67, and 64-72, Illustrated Ford Truck Parts Master Catalogs identify all the parts used by 61-67 Econolines. NORS versions of these 4,000 to 12,000 page catalogs are currently advertised in the \$125 to \$329 range. Don English and Jay Long have large technical reference libraries containing most all the U.S. and Canadian original 61-67 Econoline Ford literature (e.g., dealer's albums, paint chips, model year suggested price lists, sales folders, owners handbooks, shop manuals, parts & accessory catalogs, etc.). The best and least expensive aftermarket book containing comprehensive early Econoline information is Paul McLaughlin's out of print paperbound "Ford 1957-67 Pick-ups" (Motorbooks International). The next best aftermarket book (about \$45) with significant Econoline coverage is James Wagner's hardcover "Ford Trucks Since 1905" (Crestline).

**APPLICABLE PARTS.** Approximately 1,630 of the individual parts used to build an early Econoline were specifically designed for these trucks. All other components were "interchange" items also used by other 60's FoMoCo cars and trucks. When demand for a given replaceable "service" part declines to a certain level, Ford declares it "Obsolete," and removes it from their system. Remaining Ford warehouse stock is then auctioned in truckload lots to vendors who remarket these Ford made obsolete parts as New Obsolete Stock (NOS). Mail order Ford Obsolete Parts vendors who mainly specialize in NOS parts (e.g., Green Sales) neither advertise, nor publish catalogs due to their rapid inventory turnover. These NOS vendors also only recognize original Ford part numbers as a means of identifying items stocked. As a high demand obsolete part becomes unobtainable on the NOS market, specialized manufacturers produce reproductions known as New Obsolete Reproduction Stock

(NORS). Most mail order Ford Obsolete Parts vendors, and NORS manufacturers, tend to specialize in parts for specific models, such as T-Birds, Mustangs, F100s, etc., but many of their (often NORS) interchange parts are also applicable to 61-67 Econolines. Both Mac's Antique Auto Parts (\$5) and Dennis Carpenter Reproductions (\$3) publish NORS parts catalogs with 61-67 Econoline sections. Northwest Classic Falcons also provides a printable on-line listing of their parts which are applicable to early Econolines. Some of the 61-67 Econoline NORS items currently being manufactured are: shop manuals, universal black front floor mats, black armrests, floor heater decal, cargo door operating decal, urethane spring shackle and sway bar bushings, transmission mounts, front door exterior handles, interior door/window handles, breakerless ignition kits, dome light lenses/bezels, dash knobs, cast aluminum parking brake handle, windshields, exterior bodyside patch panels, turn signal switches, windshield weather seals, body side and rear window weather seals, front turn signal lenses, cardboard standard sun visors, front door window channel kits, front and cargo door weather seals. Presently there are no known reliable sources for new: 7.25" light duty rear axle housings, pickup tailgates/hinges, bumpers, cowl and roof sheet metal panels, doors, steering wheels, steering shafts and boxes, gauges, window regulators gas tanks, 67 master cylinders, 67 round backup lights/lenses/bezels, and 62-65 wide and 66-67 narrow body side trim moldings. When any of these items are desired, it is generally necessary to locate and repair junkyard versions.

**THE FORD PART NUMBERING SYSTEM.** In Ford Parts Catalogs, items are initially segregated into the following groups:

- [1] **Appearance/Maintenance** (paint, etc.).
- [2] **Chassis/Engine/Electrical.**
- [3] **Body/Windows,**
- [4] **Soft Trim** (rubber, upholstery, etc.).
- [5] **Standard and Utility Hard-**

**ware** (nuts, bolts, screws, fasteners, etc.). Ford Car/Truck Parts & Accessory Catalogs segregate parts/assemblies into the first four above categories and sequentially display them in group code numeric sequence and then by applicable series and model year. Standard and Utility Hardware Parts are listed in both independent dedicated special catalogs, and are also listed in "regular" Ford Car/Truck Parts/Accessory Catalogs where their (non-prefixed) part numbers are shown immediately following the listing for parts which require specific utility hardware items for attachment to other parts and/or attachment of parts assemblies. When the part numbers cast/stamped on a part differ from the catalog part number, they most often identify a specific manufacturing production run.

**C3UZ87 51945-AAB** is a typical Ford Part Number applicable to an early Econoline who's **Prefix** identifies an item originally designed by the Ford Division as a Service Replacement Part (**Z**), for a 1963 (**C3**) Econoline (**U**) with a pickup body type (**87**). When a Prefix ends in a two digit number it indicates a part number that's only assigned to a structured **Group Code** identifying Body and/or Soft Trim items such as, **51945** which indicates a truck headliner, and **-AAB** is a **Part Number Suffix** which identifies the 1963 Econoline gray non-perforated version. Vendors other than Ford often display Part Numbers with their component elements rearranged: e.g., 51945-AAB-C3UZ87. Some "Econoline only parts" were not originally designed for Econolines and some parts specifically designed for Econolines are also used by other Ford vehicles. e.g., C1UB89 03110-A, 61-67 Econoline Windshield Rubber Seal, is also used by many other Ford trucks. These types of parts are known as **Interchange** parts. When a part is no longer to be "serviced" (i.e., stocked by) FoMoCo it is designated as **Obsolete Stock**, and any remaining Ford warehouse quantities are

auctioned in bulk lots (i.e., not segregated by model application) to Obsolete Ford parts specialty vendors who normally only identify these New (original Ford) Obsolete Stock (NOS) parts by their Ford part numbers and who also acquire bulk lots of Ford made parts from individual Ford dealers going out of business. After 1959, whenever an Obsolete Ford part was later returned to "service" (e.g., 49-51 Ford car brake master cylinder A9A-2140-A), it was assigned a new part number (e.g., C1UU-2140-A) which **Superseded** the original part number. All Ford part numbers consist of one or more of the following elements displayed in the sequence below:

**PREFIX.** Consists of one to eight characters and is most often shown followed by a blank space or a hyphen. Those applicable to 60s Canadian peculiar parts most often start with CC or CD. Except for the single letter "M" prefix which identifies non model year specific Ford Racing Performance Parts (formerly Ford Motorsport SVO), prefixes of items initially designed for applications after model year 1959 always have 4 to 8 characters. Prefixes are not used in part numbers identifying Standard Utility Hardware. Prefixes commencing with the characters CIU thru G9U identify items specifically designed for 61-2009 Econolines or Falcon Bus/Club Wagons. Strangely, some parts originally designed for a specific model application are used, but never on the model indicated by the prefix.

*First character is the decade of intended model year application.*

**A** = 40's model year application (code often deleted), **B** = 50's model year application, **C** = 60's model year application, **D** = 70's model year application, **E** = 80's model year application, **F** = 90's model year application, **G** = 2000's model year applications.

*Second character is the decade's specific year of intended application.*

*Third character identifies the intended model application.*

**A** = Generic full size Fords. **B** = 40-60 Buses, 70-73 Bronco, 75-77 Maverick, 78-83 Fairmont. **C** = 57-69 COE Truck. **D** = 60-69 Falcon, 70-74 Maverick, 75-82 Granada, 83-up LTD. **E** = 70-73 COE Truck, 76-80 Pinto, 81-up Escort. **F** = Trans Am. **G** = 61-67 Comet, 68-76 Montego. **H** = Holman Moody HiPo, 66-82 Heavy/Highway Truck, **J** = Industrial. **L** = 60 Lincoln, 60-69 Continental. **M** = Mercury. **O** = 69-76 Fairlane, 77-79 Torino, 77-79 LTD II. **P** = 57-72 Panel/Step Van, **S** = Thunderbird. **T** = 58-up Any and/or all Trucks. **U** = Econoline/Falcon Station Bus/Club Wagon. **V** = 65-up Lincoln exc Continental. **W** = 67-80 Cougar, 81-82 XR7, 83-up Cougar, **X** = 70-73 light duty Truck. **Y** = 71-74 Comet, 75-80 Monarch, 81-82 Cougar, 83-up Marquis. **Z** = Mustang. **5** = 82-up Continental. **6** = 71-75 Pantera, 84-up Topaz. **7** = 71-82 Courier, 83-up Ranger/Bronco, 91-up Explorer.

*Fourth character represents the part type and/or the design division.*

**A** = Light Truck Engineering Division. **B** = Body and Electrical Product Division. **C** = Chassis. **D** = Overseas Product Engineering. **E** = Engine. **F** = General Parts/Electrical and Electronics Division. **H** = Climate Control (72-up). **J** = Autolite/Ford Parts & Service Division. **L** = Industrial Engine Parts & Service. **M** = Performance/Special Vehicle Operations (including Holman Moody). **N** = Tractor Parts. **P** = Auto Transmission. **R** = Manual Transmission. **S** = Light & Heavy Truck Special Order Parts. **T** = Heavy Truck Engineering. **U** = Special Vehicle Operations. **W** = Axle and Driveshaft. **X** = Emissions, Economy and Special Vehicle Engineering (Muscle Car Parts). **Y** = Lincoln/Mercury Service Parts. **Z** = Ford Service Parts.

*Fifth & Sixth characters are intended initial body type application codes.*

**01-65** = Ford Car body types. **66** = Style Side 61-63 F series unit body pickup w/o rear fenders. **81** = Conventional Cab non-pickup. **82** = 49-60 Style side Panel Truck. **83** = Flairside

(rear fendered) Pickup. **85** = Parcel delivery step van. **87** = Econoline pickup. **89** = 61-01 Econoline van. **91/2** = Cab Over Engine big trucks. **97** = Ranchero pickup. **99** = Styleside (F series w/o rear fenders or unit body) Pickup.

**2. GROUP CODE.** Consists of four or more characters and appears in all Ford part numbers. Ford Parts Illustrations mostly display *Group Codes*, rather than entire part numbers. Except for *Standard and Utility Hardware* items, a Group Code's number sequence is specifically structured to identify a part's functional application, e.g., number sequences from 6000 to 6944 are only assigned to engines and internal components, and 1130 is in all part numbers assigned to hubcaps and/or wheel covers.

*Chassis, Engine, & Electrical (group code series sequences)*

**1000-1250** = Wheels, hubs, drums. **1350-1499** = Spare wheel carrier. **2001-2900** = Brake system. **3000-3764** = Front axle, suspension and steering gear. **4000-4859** = Rear axles, driveshafts. **5000-5832** = Chassis/frame, exhaust, springs, stabilizer. **6000-6898** = Engines/internal components. **7000-7997** = Transmissions, clutches. **8000-8689** = Cooling system. **9000-9999** = Fuel system. **10000-10990** = Electrical & lighting systems. **16000-17250** = Exterior trim/bright work. **17255-17999** = Speedometer, wipers, mirror. **18000-19999** = Shocks, HVAC, radios, miscellaneous accessories.

*Body, Soft Trim, & Windows*

**00001-99999** = Body/Soft Trim front, **10000-19999** = Body/Soft Trim floor, **20000-39999** = Body/Soft Trim doors, quarter & side, **40000-54999** = Body/Soft Trim back, roof, seats, misc.

**3. SUFFIX.** has two or more characters starting with a hyphen. Most pre-59 part numbers lack a *Suffix*, but *Standard & Utility Hardware* items always have a *Suffix* starting with dash S (-S), e.g., 52376-S35.