

Thunderbird Tech Tips and Trivia

FORD'S PART NUMBERING SYSTEM

by Ron Wright

Ford Motor Company uses a system for numbering its parts which describes the year, model, basic location on the car, and differences in similar pieces.

Using their "Text" and "Illustrations" catalogs, it is possible to identify any piece of a given model Ford-produced auto or truck. Understanding how to de-code their numbering system will be useful to the individual restorer for ordering parts from Ford Motor Co. or from any supplier who offers original or reproduced parts. Often times parts will turn up at swap meets or garage sales in the original boxes or wrappers, or will have the numbers stamped on them. Knowing what these numbers mean can save you money and help in locating an obsolete part.

Listed below is a sample part number for a 1952 Ford passenger car air cleaner assembly. We will use it as an example to explain how the numbering system works.

B2AZ 9600-A

The first two digits show the model year the part was first used. The first digit is the decade and the second is the year. Ford started with the 1940's for their numbering. A = 1940's, B = 1950's, C = 1960's, D = 1970's, and E = 1980's. The second digit will be the number 1 thru 9, indicating the year within the decade.

In our example, the B is the 1950's and the 2 is the year, meaning 1952. Often times, the part number (example first used in 1952) can be carried over to later years for another model car which uses the same part. This is where the Ford "Text" catalog is useful as it would show every year and model that the described part would fit.

The third digit would tell the model on which the part was used. Listed below is a chart of the letter codes for the different models: A = Passenger Car, D = Falcon, G = Montego, K = Zephyr, L = Lincoln, Mark series, M = Mercury, N = Tractor or Industrial, O = Fairlane, S = Thunderbird, T = Truck, V = Lincoln Town Car, and Z = Mustang.

In our example, the third digit is an "A", meaning passenger car.

The fourth digit is the design responsibility symbol. It is a code for the design office that had the responsibility of designing the part. This is the "Z" in the example.

The next group of numbers give the full description of the part. Ford has assigned numerical groups to specific areas of the vehicle. The following is a listing of these groups: 1000-2999, Wheel and Brakes; 3000-3999, Front Suspension and Steering; 4000-4999, Axle and Drivetrain; 5000-5999, Frame and Exhaust; 6000-6999, Engine; 7000-7999, Transmission; 8000-8999, Cooling System and Grill; 9000-9999, Fuel System; 10000-12999, Alternator, Generator, Starter, and Distributor; 13000-15999, Lamps and Wiring System; 16000-16999, Body Parts; 17000-19999, Speedo, Bumpers, Air Conditioning, and Heating; 20000-20999, Doors and Related Parts; 30000-39999, Little Used; 40000-59999, Back, Roof, and Luggage Compartment; and 60000-69999, Seat Parts.

Our example main body number 9600 falls with the Fuel System range and is an air cleaner.

The last digit shows any changes or minor differences with the basic part. This last digit usually starts at "A". This could indicate a difference of color, voltage, or maybe any improvement that was made to the part.

The next time you spot an old style FOMOCO box at your neighbor's yard sale, take a close look at it. It just could be the rare part to cap your restoration project. Does anyone have a B5A-18495-A lying around?

Ron Wright is a Thunderbird enthusiast and previously editor of "The Classic Thunderbird Trader". The Ford/Mustang Buyer's Guide, March 1987

LITTLE BIRD DATA PLATE

ASSEMBLY PLANT (Dearborn) ————

MODEL YEAR ————

ENGINE CODE (292 C.I.)¹ ————

BODY STYLE ————

CONSECUTIVE UNIT NO. (All Ford cars assembled) ————

SERIAL NO. * P 6 F H 221739 *

This vehicle is constructed under U.S. Letters Patent
 XXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXXX
 XXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXXX
 Other Patents Pending

BODY COLOR TRIM PRODUCTION CODE

40A K XB 13 B SD 155

MADE IN THE U.S.A. BY FORD REG. U.S. PATENT OFFICE

BODY TYPE² ———— 40A K XB 13 B SD 155

BODY COLOR³ (Fiesta Red) ————

TRIM COLOR (Red & White) ————

SCHEDULED ITEM NO.⁴ ————

DEALER CODE⁵ ————

MONTH (February) ————

DAY OF THE MONTH ————

¹ Either 193 HP w/3-speed transmission or 198 HP w/Fordomatic or Overdrive.

⁴ 155th automobile (not Only Thunderbirds) scheduled to be assembled on February 13, 1956.

² All '55 & '56 models were coded 40A, whereas all '57 models were coded 40.

⁵ SD signifies a Boston, Mass. dealer ordered this particular car

³ Body color and hard top. If a second letter shows, it indicates a different color for the hard top.

THUNDERBIRD COLORS

(letters refer to data plate identification)

EXTERIOR

1955

A Raven Black
 R Torch Red
 T Thunderbird Blue
 E Snowshoe White
 V Goldenrod Yellow

1956

A Raven Black
 E Colonial White
 J Buckskin Tan
 K Fiesta Red
 L Peacock Blue
 T Thunderbird Gray
 X Navajo Gray
 Z Thunderbird Green
 M Goldenglow Yellow
 Y Sunset Coral

1957

(initially)

A Raven Black
 E Colonial White
 F Starmist Blue
 J Willow Green
 V Flame Red
 N Gunmetal Gray
 Y Inca Gold
 Z Coral Sand
 Q Thunderbird Bronze
 X Dusk Rose
 (starting September 1957)
 G Sun Gold (replaces Y)
 R Torch Red (replaces V)
 L Azure Blue (replaces F)
 H Gunmetal Gray (replaces N)
 N Seaspray Green (replaces J)

TRIM

(all vinyl except a very few genuine leather)

1955

XA or A Black and White
 XB or B Red and White
 XC or C Turquoise and White
 XD or D Black and Yellow

1956

XA Black and White
 XB Red and White
 XC Peacock and White
 XD Tan and White
 XF Green and White
 XG Brown and White

1957

XA Raven and Colonial
 XL Dresden Blue and Starmist Blue
 XM Cumberland Green and Willow Green
 XH Flame Red
 XJ Bronze
 XK Colonial White

MANUFACTURING DATE

1ST YEAR

January A	May E	September J
February B	June F	October K
March C	July G	November L
April D	August H	December M

2ND YEAR

January N	May S	September W
February P	June T	October X
March Q	July U	November Y
April R	August V	December Z

ENGINE CODE

YEAR	CODE	ENGINE	CARB.	TRANSMISSION	HORSEPOWER
1955	P	292	4V	3-Speed	193
	P	292	4V	Fordomatic	198
	P	292	4V	Overdrive	198
1956	M	292	4V	3-Speed	202
	P	312	4V	Overdrive	215
	P	312	4V	Fordomatic	225
	P	312	8V	3-Spd or O/D	260
1957	C	292	2V	3-Speed	212
	D	312	4V	Fdmtc or O/D	245
	E	312	8V	All	270
	F	312	4V	All	300*

* Supercharged

TRANSMISSION TYPE CODE

(shows on late 1957 type data plates only)

CODE	TRANSMISSION
1	3-Speed Manual Shift
2	Overdrive
3	Fordomatic (two speed)

DISTRICT CODES

Sales Area Codes (letters and numbers never used together)

11/SD Boston	44/SP Twin Cities
12/BF Buffalo	45/DO Davenport
13/BX New York	51/DN Denver
14/PI Pittsburgh	52/DS Des Moines
15 Newark	53/KS Kansas City
21/NK Atlanta	54/NB Omaha
22/CE Charlotte	55/SL St. Louis
23/DI Philadelphia	61/DP Dallas
24/KJ Jacksonville	62/SU Houston
25/RP Richmond	63/Gb Memphis
26/DC Washington, D.C.	64/NR New Orleans
31/CI Cincinnati	65/KL Oklahoma City
32/CL Cleveland	71/LP Los Angeles
33/DD Detroit	72/SK San Jose
34/NP Indianapolis	73/SC Salt Lake City
35/FX Lansing	74/SE Seattle
36/LX Louisville	81/CA Ford of Canada
41/CX Chicago	82/EX FMC Export Ops., New Jersey
42/RG Fargo	84/EO FMC Trans. & Equip. Dept.
43/KE Rockford	

1955 THUNDERBIRD

The suggested list price set forth in the attachments hereto are suggested prices. They are for the convenience of the Dealer only and are not intended nor should they be interpreted to be determinative of the price Dealers may charge their customers on resale. Dealers may change whatever prices they deem proper.

Thunderbird - Hard Top.....\$ 3,278.00

Above price includes Oil Filter, Oil Bath Air Cleaner, P/A Wipers, Turn Indicators, Wheel Covers, Fender Shields and Anti-Freeze.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Tachometer	Foam Rubber Seat - Full Width
Electric Clock with Sweep Second Hand	Adjustable Steering Wheel
Power Seat	Built-In Arm Rests
Hard Top	Floor Carpet
Outside Left Hand Body Mount Mirror	Ash Tray
6.70 X 15 4-Ply Tubeless Tires	Dual Horn
292 CU. IN. OHV 8 Cyl. Engine	Cigar Lighter
Battery 6 Volt 90 Amps	Horn Ring
Generator 40 Amps	Automatic Interior Light
Four Barrel Carburetor	Glove Box Lock
Built-In Dual Exhaust	All Vinyl Trim

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Radio - 8 Tube and Antenna.....	\$100.00
Heater - Magic Air.....	85.00
Fordomatic.....	215.00
Overdrive.....	110.00
Windshield Washer.....	10.00
Wire Wheel Covers.....	35.00
Power Steering.....	92.00
Power Brakes.....	40.00
Power Window Lifts.....	70.00
Tinted Glass.....	25.00
Engine Dress Up Kit.....	25.00
(5) 6.70 X 15 4-Ply W/S/W.....	30.00
Convertible Top - In Lieu of Standard Hard Top.....	75.00
Convertible Top - In Addition to Standard Hard Top.....	290.00

EXTERIOR PAINT COLORS

Raven Black
 Snowshoe White
 Torch Red
 Thunderbird Blue
 Goldenrod Yellow

INTERIOR TRIM COLORS

Black and White Vinyl
 Red and White Vinyl
 Turquoise and White Vinyl
 Black and Yellow Vinyl

SOFT TOP FABRIC AND COLORS

Black Rayon

White Vinyl Plastic

PRODUCTION TOTAL: 16,155 UNITS FROM SEPTEMBER 09, 1954 TO SEPTEMBER 14, 1955

1956 THUNDERBIRD

Hard Top - With or Without Port Holes.....	\$ 3,389.00
Soft Top.....	3,414.00
Both Tops.....	3,711.00

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Tachometer	Foam Rubber Seat - Full Width
Electric Clock with Sweep Second Hand	Adjustable Steering Wheel
Outside L/H Body Mount Mirror	Built-In Dual Exhaust
Floor Carpet	Dual Horns
Horn Ring	Glove Box Lock
Battery, 12 Volt, 55 AMP.	Positive Action Wipers
Turn Indicators	Fuel Filter
Built-In Arm Rests	Ash Tray
6.70 X 15 4-Ply Tubeless Tires	Cigar Lighter
Automatic Interior Light	All Vinyl Trim
Generator, 30 AMP.	Sun Visors

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Fordomatic.....	\$218.00
Power Steering.....	68.00
4 Way Power Seat.....	70.00
Power Brakes.....	42.50
Power Window Lifts.....	71.00
Safety Package A (Seat Belts).....	22.00
Safety Package B (Padded Dash).....	35.00
Tinted Glass.....	30.00
Engine Dress Up Kit.....	22.00
Windshield Washer.....	13.50
(5) 6.70 X 15 4-Ply White Side Wall Tubeless Tires.....	36.00
Radio - 9 Tube and Antenna.....	113.00
Heater - Magic Air.....	86.50
Lights, Back-up.....	8.50
Fender Shields, Rear.....	28.50
Full Wheel Covers.....	15.50
Tonneau Cover.....	22.75

EXTERIOR PAINT COLORS

Raven Black	Goldenrod Yellow
Colonial White	Thunderbird Gray
Buckskin Tan	Navajo Gray
Fiesta Red	Sunset Coral
Peacock Blue	Thunderbird Green

INTERIOR TRIM COLORS

Black and White Vinyl
Red and White Vinyl
Peacock Blue and White Vinyl
Tan and White Vinyl
Green and White Vinyl
Brown and White Vinyl

SOFT TOP FABRIC AND COLORS

Black Rayon	White Vinyl Plastic
	Tan Vinyl Plastic

PRODUCTION TOTAL: 15,631 UNITS FROM OCTOBER 17, 1955 TO AUGUST 24, 1956

1957 THUNDERBIRD

Hard Top - With or Without Port Holes.....	\$ 3,764.00
Soft Top.....	3,841.00
Both Tops.....	4,041.00

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

292 C.I.D., 212 H.P.	3 Speed Manual Transmission
Fuel Filter	Paper Filter Air Cleaner
Tachometer	Foam Rubber Seat - Full Width
Outside L/H Body Mount Mirror	Built-In Dual Exhaust
Electric Clock with Sweep Second Hand	Adjustable Steering Wheel
7.50 X 14 4-Ply Tubeless Tires	Built-In Arm Rests
Floor Carpet	Ash Tray
Dual Horns	Cigar Lighter
Horn Ring	Automatic Interior Light
Glove Box Lock	All Vinyl Trim
Battery, 12 Volt, 55 AMP.	Positive Action Wipers
Turn Indicators	Generator, 30 AMP.
Padded Instrument Panel	Padded Sun Visors
Full Wheel Covers	

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Fordomatic - 312 C.I.D., 245 H.P. Engine.....	\$220.00
Overdrive - 245 H.P.....	150.00
Fordomatic - Special Vent 312 C.I.D., 270 H.P. Engine.....	458.00
Overdrive - 270 H.P.....	385.00
Fordomatic - 312 C.I.D., 300 H.P., Supercharged Engine.....	517.00
Power Seat.....	95.00
Power Steering.....	77.00
Power Brakes.....	45.00
Power Window Lifts.....	72.00
Tinted Glass.....	33.00
Engine Dress Up Kit.....	21.50
(5) 7.50 X 14 4-Ply White Side Wall Tires.....	50.00
Radio - 9 Tube and Antenna.....	117.00
Heater - Magic Air.....	88.00
Windshield Washer.....	15.00
Fender Shields, Rear.....	28.00
Gas Tank Lock Cap.....	2.75
Tonneau Cover.....	28.00
Lights, Back-up.....	8.00
Safety Belts (2).....	15.00
Battery 12 Volt, 70 AMP.....	8.00

EXTERIOR PAINT COLORS

Raven Black	Thunderbird Bronze
Colonial White	Flame Red
Starmist Blue	Dusk Rose
Willow Green	Inca Gold
Gunmetal Gray	Coral Sand

INTERIOR TRIM COLORS

Raven and Colonial White Vinyl
Flame Red Vinyl
Bronze Vinyl
Colonial White Vinyl
Dresden Blue and Starmist Blue
Cumberland and Willow Green

SOFT TOP FABRIC AND COLORS

Black Rayon	White Vinyl Plastic
Tan Rayon	Tan Vinyl Plastic
Blue Rayon	

PRODUCTION TOTAL: 21,380 UNITS FROM OCTOBER 11, 1956 TO DECEMBER 13, 1957