

IN SEARCH OF...

The GMC Motorhome TZE

BY BILL BRYANT | PLEASANT VALLEY, NEW YORK | PREVIOUS OWNER 1976 PALM BEACH

Every so often an owner or potential owner is unsure not only where to find "that official number", but just what does that jumble of letters and numbers mean. We hope to clear this mystery up right here.

On every GMC Motorhome there are four locations where the TZE number is shown. Let's search for those locations...

1 FIREWALL

Primary VIN/TZE aluminum plate embossed with weights and TZE number, riveted with special rivets to firewall behind passenger access door.



1973-1974



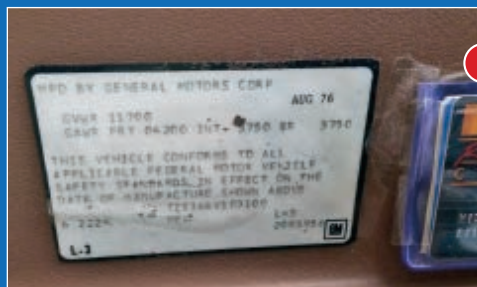
1975-1978

2 DRIVER'S AREA

Federal Safety Standards sticker located on the side panel to the left of the driver's knee.



1973-1974



1975-1978

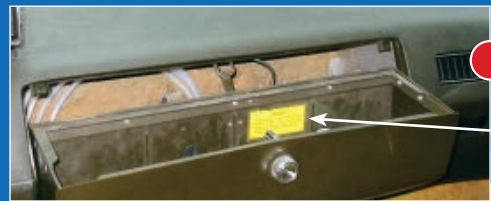
Number

Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

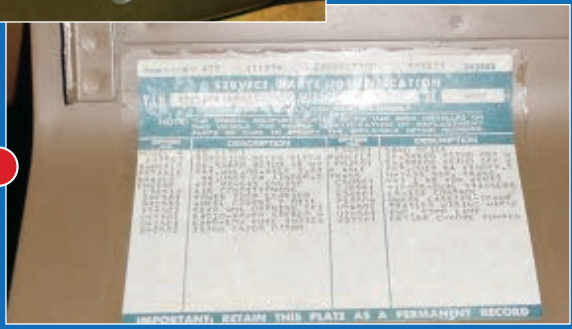
3 GLOVE BOX

Service Parts Identification sticker in glove box identifies TZE number, dates, options, and other details.

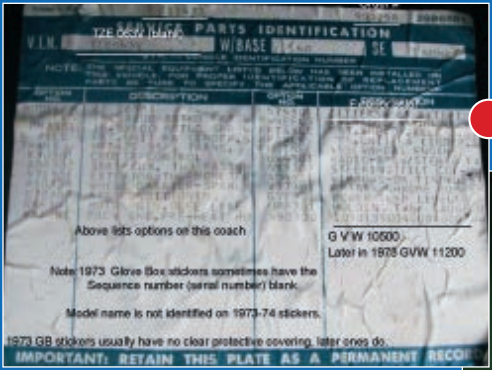
NOTE: About the first 500 of the 1973 coaches had the last four TZE sequence number positions BLANK, so go to other locations.



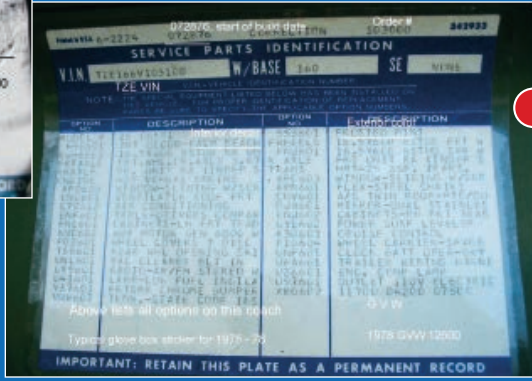
1973-1974
On the back



1975-1978



1973 sticker



1976 Palm Beach sticker

4 GMC MOTORHOME FRAME

Located on the drivers side from the center of the bogey mount forward to the center of the number is 54".

It is stamped upside down - 1 1/2" from top of frame. This photo is from a 1978 coach (8), sequence number (1335) = 8V101335.



Motorhome Frame Rail

DECODING OF...

The GMC Motorhome TZE

The following information should be used to decode the letters and numbers used for TZE identification.

Vin Decoder

	Example: TZE167V102359
T	Manufactured by General Motors
Z	Three axle motorhome
E	Gasoline Engine
	Interior Code
0	GM interior from 1973 to 1974
1	GM interior from 1975 to 1978
2	Twin bed interior for 1976 and 1977
3	Transmode (sold without interior or windows)
	Model Code
6	260 (26 feet long)
3	230 (23 feet long)
	Model Year
7	In this case, it would be 1977
	Manufacturing Plant Code
V	Pontiac, Michigan
1	First digit of production series number All production started with a "1" in this position
0	Second digit of production series number Since total production was less than 13,000, all GMC units had a "0" in this position
2359	Production sequence number Reset to "0" each year

The following list identifies the model number located on the Service Parts Identification sticker (first line).

ZEO 6581	= 26' GMC MHs with "standard" GMC interior, all years
ZEO 6582	= 26' Edgemonte
ZEO 6083	= 23' GMCMHs 1973 and 1974
ZEO 6584	= 26' GMCMH twin bed
ZEO 6083	= 23' Transmode 1975 to 1978
ZEO 6583	= 26' Transmode 1975 to 1978



Additional information from Bill Bryant...

Model identification by interior décor: www.gcmhphotos.com/photos/g3516-gmc-mh-model-identification-by-interior.html
The scanned images are pages of various brochures. These are assembled and grouped to make comparison relatively easy.

Production changes: www.gcmhphotos.com/photos/g3475-production-changes-page1.html
There are photos with captions of various changes to production that are of interest. For example, the door latch.

Number

(Vehicle Identification Number)

WHICH MODEL IS IT?

One of the most asked questions by a new GMC Motorhome owner is often, “How do I tell which model I have”? This may be easy for an original coach since it is printed in big letters in three places on the outside. As the paint and interior items are changed over a 40-plus-year-period, it now becomes much more difficult. The details here will hopefully enable you to determine the answer to this sometimes difficult question.

Starting with **just** the 1973 GMC Motorhome model there were:

- Four different motorhome models
- Two motorhome lengths, 23’ and 26’
- Six exterior paint colors: three standard and three optional
- Four 23’ floor plans
- Eleven 26’ floor plans

Let’s not quite yet get into the other five years of models and the many Transmode upfitters until we resolve some 1973 and 1974 questions.

The 1973 and 1974 models are the most difficult to identify since once the interiors are changed, there is no documented record on the vehicle itself. Exterior paint is only a partial clue as four of the six colors are used on multiple models. Only Sky Blue (Glacier) and Parrot Green (Sequoia) are unique to the model. Sequoia has one other clue – only this model uses a simulated birch interior wood tone on the modules, while the other three models all use a teakwood tone.

The clues that are left behind are often our only option. That would be those pieces of original interior materials or rugs trapped under modules, original paint on the firewall behind the front access doors, and perhaps the model names were not completely sanded off before the repaint. Or possibly the “Gemini Traveler” upfitter worksheet left behind on the water tank or behind the refrigerator.

The 1975 GMC Motorhome interiors were now brought in house in Pontiac, Michigan with Grand Rapids Furniture Co.

being the supplying vendor using Flexsteel furniture and Collins & Aikman upholstery materials. Model identification was now somewhat easier since exterior colors and trim were usually unique to model and the Service Parts Information sticker on the glove box identified the model name and color.

With the 1975 through 1978 models, many things changed. There were new models with new names, new colors, and many mechanical upgrades. The Transmode first offered for 1975 was essentially a blank slate to be filled out for any need or purpose you desired. This now meant that there were many upfitters out there and little in the way of records was left behind for us to determine the vehicle details. Coachmen was a major Transmode upfitter with the Royale and Birchaven models. Below, we show their identification, which was a serial number stamped on the rear frame cross member.

Following is more helpful information:

Service Parts Identification Label

If the motorhome was furnished with a GMC interior, the label in the glove box identifies the interior finish model, except for the 1973 and 1974 models.

Regular Production Option Number	Model
641	Kingsley
681	Glenbrook
683	Edgemonte
685	Coca Cola
690	Sequoia
692	Painted Desert
693	Glacier
695	Canyon Lands
696	Eleganza SE
697	Eleganza II
698	Palm Beach

VERIFYING THE DATE

BY **JANET FREY** | MILFORD SQUARE, PENNSYLVANIA | PREVIOUS OWNER 1976 PALM BEACH

There have been many comments about the GMC Community, and how much support there is for GMC Motorhome owners. Here is a story that will show another facet of the Community.

GMC Motorhome owner and GMCMI member Neil Catlow who lives in the United Kingdom was having an issue regarding the Historic Vehicle tax class. In April 2018, the UK government introduced free road tax and no vehicle testing for “historic vehicles” built before 1978. They needed a confirmation of the build date. So, Neil contacted GMCMI asking for an explanation of the TZE number and its relevance to the date issue. Of course, he thought that simply completing a form at the tax office would suffice, or perhaps he would need a letter from GMCMI. In May 2018, he received a detailed letter asking for more dating evidence to verify the date of manufacture. Reading the letter provides a perfect test of your favorite headache remedy! After consulting with Bill Bryant as to the intricacies of the TZE number and the

status of his 1977 Birchaven as a Transmode, Neil was able to locate a group called GM Media Archive, who could apparently supply an original invoice (the archive starts with 1976 and beyond). So, he contacted them, and they responded with a detailed letter, which read:

*Good morning Neil,
Thank you for your interest in the GM Media Archive. Please fill out the attached order form to assist with your on-line request for a vehicle invoice for your 1977 GMC Motorhome. The vehicle invoice is the documentation of the vehicle cost broken out by model and factory options. It contains the original ship to dealer information, MSRP and invoice number that General Motors used to bill the dealer. The invoices are archived on microfilm, microfiche, CD, and is organized by VIN number. Vehicle Invoices are printed from microfilm or microfiche then scanned and emailed as an Adobe PDF for \$50 USD.*

*If you would like to obtain a vehicle invoice please complete the form including payment information and return. Once received we will begin researching for your vehicles invoice.
Thank you and have a great day!*

*GMMA Team, Allied Vaughn
Livonia, MI 48150
p. 734-261-5086 f. 734-261-5216
BE SURE TO CHECK OUT*

www.gmmmediarchive.com www.gmphotostore.com



RVIA badge on all RVs, GMC plate on about 20% of GMC Motorhomes, state decal applied as required.

MORE FOUND... Numbers, tags, and stickers

There are even more numbers, tags and stickers on a GMC Motorhome. Generally, they are of no value in determining the TZE. Here are two examples:

OF MANUFACTURE

By the end of May, Neil was informed that the payment had been received and that the response could be expected in 5 to 10 days.

Finally, in July 2018, Neil reported that he was successful in getting the motorhome registered as "Historic" in the UK, so no more road tax or MOT needed.

He was very appreciative, and it was wonderful to have this additional information for the GMC Community. By the way, Neil says, "the essential piece of documentation was the copy of the original invoice dated 10-12-76 to the Cadillac dealer McFarlane in Birmingham (Alabama). I found a McFarlane bumper badge in the motorhome under the driver's seat a couple of years ago. The Cadillac dealer is still at this address but it is now Crest and they do not reply to emails so I have no info on the first owner".



GMC ATLANTA		ZE 06083		3/067 76/12/10		6628	
DATE	TIME	DATE	TIME	DATE	TIME	DATE	TIME
03/21/77	AJ	03/21/77	AJ	03/21/77	GC		
C TZE337V100811		17934.00	24.12	14709.16	14733.28	245	
B8701	INSULATION-FLOOR	95.00		77.90	77.90		
QJ8701	MIRROR-DUAL STAI	28.00		16.40	16.40		
QY8701	POWER SUSP LEVEL	118.00		131.20	131.20		
K30701	CRUISE CONTROL	34.00		90.20	90.20		
PNJ701	18.5X600 8STUD S	70.00		27.88	27.88		
P02701	WHEEL COVERS 7 0	35.00		57.40	57.40		
P10704	WHEEL CARRIER-SP	65.00		28.70	28.70		
T58701	REAR WHL OPENING	343.00		53.30	53.30		
UX5701	RADIO-AM/FM STER	22.00		281.26	281.26		
U24701	ENC. COMP LAMP	14.00		18.04	18.04		
U41701	LAMP-LOW FUEL IN	170.00		11.48	11.48		
YX701	SHIPPING PACKAGE	85.00		139.40	139.40		
V37701	FRTARR CHROME BU	N/C		69.70	69.70		
X80702	10500 0N200 0700	50.00		41.00	41.00		
S80701	EXTERIOR COLOR-Y	80.00		65.60	65.60		
XRH701	8.75X16.5 D 2	160.00	.08	131.20	131.20		
YRH701	8.75X16.5 D 4	129.00	.16	109.78	109.78		
ZRH701	8.75X16.5 D 1		4.04				
SUB TOTAL		19580.00	28.42	16055.60	16084.02		
OUTBOUND FREIGHT				181.35	181.35		
TOTAL INVOICE PRICE		19580.00	28.42	16236.95	16265.37		
MC FARLANE CADILLAC, INC		BIRMINGHAM	AL	53 130	3047	05/24/77	54001853626
COACHMAN INC JIMMY DIV		ELKHART	IN				



Coachmen serial number at rear cross member, passenger side. 1288 403557

The GMC Motorhome Registry

The Registry website is where owners of a GMC Motorhome or GMC Transmode are encouraged to register their names and the coach's TZE number (VIN).

The information, which is of historical significance, is used only by, and for, owners of these vintage vehicles.

Visit www.gmc-mhregistry.com

Read more about the Coachmen Birchaven and Royale in the Fall 2016 issue of GMC Vintage RVing magazine: www.gmc-mi.com/gmc-vintage-rving/