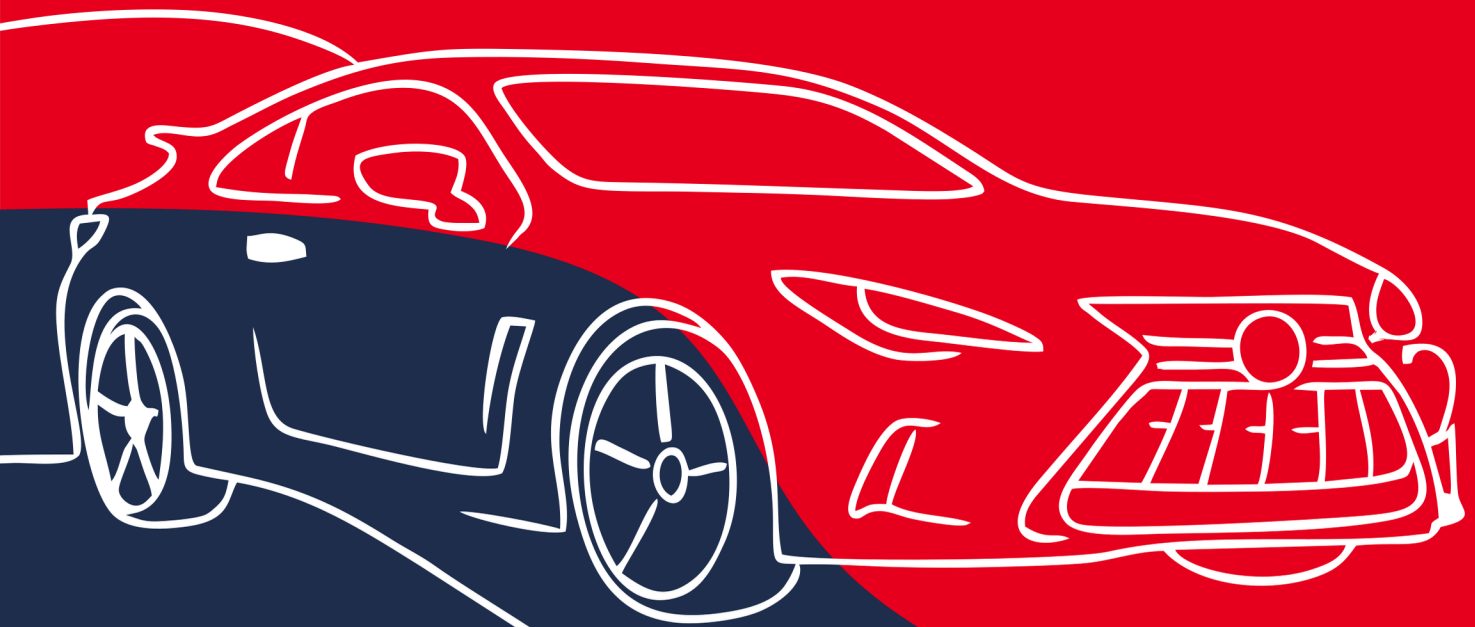


1996 GMC Sierra 1500 Transmission Specs & Service Insights

User Manual



*Please keep this manual for future
reference on driving and maintenance tips.*

1996 GMC Sierra 1500 Transmission Specs & Service Insights

If you own a 1996 GMC Sierra 1500, knowing your transmission inside and out is a must. These trucks are old but tough, and the transmission is the heart of its performance. This guide lays out what you need to know in plain language. No fluff. Just specs, checks, and service tips you can actually use.

Transmission Overview

The 1996 GMC Sierra 1500 came with two main transmission options: a 4L60E automatic and a manual 5-speed. The 4L60E is an electronically controlled 4-speed automatic. It is durable but needs regular fluid changes to stay healthy. If you have the manual version, you are working with a simpler setup that relies on gear oil rather than automatic transmission fluid.

Both options are strong enough to handle towing and hauling, but only if maintained. These are 25+ year-old trucks, so leaks, worn seals, or slow shifting are common signs your transmission needs attention.



Basic Specs You Should Know

Here are the key specs at a glance:

- **Transmission Type:** 4L60E Automatic or NV3500 Manual
- **Fluid Type (Automatic):** Dexron III ATF
- **Fluid Capacity (Automatic):** About 11 quarts (with torque converter)
- **Fluid Type (Manual):** Synchromesh gear oil
- **Pan Bolt Torque:** 8-10 ft-lbs
- **Transmission Pan Gasket:** Reusable if undamaged
- **Service Interval:** Fluid and filter every 30,000 miles

If you are unsure which transmission you have, check the RPO code sticker inside the glove box.

"M30" means the 4L60E automatic.

Common Problems and Signs

By now, most 1997 Sierra transmissions are showing their age. Here is what to watch for:

- **Slipping gears:** Feels like the truck revs up but does not move right away. Often low fluid or clutch wear.
- **Hard shifts:** Can be a bad solenoid or dirty fluid.
- **Transmission fluid leaks:** Look around the pan, cooler lines, or rear seal.
- **Delayed engagement:** Shift to “Drive,” but there is a pause. This is usually a pressure issue.

Catch these early. Ignoring them can mean a full rebuild, which is expensive.

Step-by-Step Service Guide

Here's a straightforward way to service your transmission at home. Always work on a level surface and use jack stands when lifting the truck.

1. Gather Tools and Supplies

You will need a socket set, drain pan, a new filter, a pan gasket, fresh ATF (Dexron III), a funnel, and rags. If you have the manual transmission, get Synchronesh gear oil instead.

2. Drain the Old Fluid

Remove the transmission pan bolts carefully. Expect a mess — fluid will spill fast. Let it drain fully. Wipe the pan clean and look for metal shavings. A little dust is fine; chunks are not.

3. Replace the Filter and Gasket

Pull out the old filter and press the new one into place. Clean the gasket surface and install a new gasket if the old one is damaged.

4. Reinstall the Pan

Bolt the pan back on evenly. Do not overtighten — 8 to 10 ft-lbs is enough. Over-torquing can bend the pan.

5. Add New Fluid

Pour new ATF through the dipstick tube. Start with about 5 quarts, then check levels after starting the truck. Top it off slowly while shifting through gears.



Manual Transmission Notes

If you have the 5-speed manual, servicing is even simpler. There is no filter. You just drain the gear oil from the drain plug and refill through the fill plug until it drips out. This job takes less than 3 quarts of Synchronesh gear oil.



Keeping It Running Longer

Old transmissions do not like neglect.

Change fluid every 30,000 miles. Fix leaks right away. If you tow heavy loads, install an auxiliary transmission cooler to keep temperatures low. A cheap cooler can save you from a costly rebuild.

Always check fluid color. Bright red means good. Brown or burnt-smelling fluid means trouble. Do not wait for a breakdown — service early.

When to Consider a Replacement

At some point, repair costs may outweigh the value of the truck. If your Sierra has severe slipping, metal chunks in the pan, or no forward gears, a rebuild or replacement is likely. Buying a used or remanufactured transmission can be a smart choice if the truck is in good shape otherwise.



Final Thoughts

The 1996 GMC Sierra 1500 is a workhorse, but only if its transmission gets the care it needs. Stick to basic service, pay attention to leaks and shifting issues, and this truck will keep hauling for years. A little effort now saves a lot of money later.



Thank You

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