

Understanding Those Confusing Date Codes

By JIM HASKELL

For The Mustang Times

You'd think that looking up the date your Mustang was assembled (excuse me — its scheduled assembly date. There is a difference!) would be a relatively simple task. After all, there are charts for that purpose. They can be found in the various decoder books, catalogs from Mustang parts suppliers, some of the "How To" books and pamphlets, and, of course, the shop manuals which originated from FoMoCo itself.

All you have to do then is to find your day and month codes from the data plate or sticker on the drivers' door, find the chart for the appropriate model year, and simply read off your scheduled assembly date. Easy!

On first glance, the charts appear to be quite straightforward. For model year 1965 (which includes 1964½ production), the typical chart appears as:

First two digits are the day of the month in which car was assembled. Letter denotes month in which car was assembled.

C	.....	March 1964
D	.....	April
E	.....	May
F	.....	June
G	.....	July
H	.....	August
J	.....	September
K	.....	October
L	.....	November
M	.....	December
A	.....	January 1965
B	.....	February
Q	.....	March
R	.....	April
S	.....	May
T	.....	June
U	.....	July
V	.....	August

This chart is easy to read and logical. Some might ask why they skipped from B to Q for February to March, 1965. That's because repeating the alphabet for this particular model year, one of the longest in history, would require two C's, D's, etc. with predictable confusion over the year of assembly.

Data from the thousands of Mustangs in the "In Search of Mustangs" registry support the validity of this particular table in that all month codes are represented. Dearborn production began in March, 1964, with the

earliest entries — including Job One with a VIN of 5F08F100001 — having date codes of 05 C for March 5th. Our earliest entries for San Jose carried 14 G (July 14, 1964) codes while Mutuchen production started on February 1, 1965 (01 B).

Interestingly, it appears the Dearborn plant closed out the 1965 model year production a little sooner than San Jose or Mutuchen. The last 65's in the registry from Dearborn have date codes of 30 U (July 30, 1965) while the other two plants were assembling Mustangs well into August.

Now, if only the charts for 1966 forward were that simple! The typical chart for the post-1965 period appears as:

First two digits are the day of the month in which car was assembled. Letter denotes month in which car was assembled.

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

IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS

We encourage your participation in "IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS," an international census of Ford Mustangs and Shelby Mustangs 1964 1/2 through 1973. Data from over 40,000 Mustangs are already included in the census. Make sure yours is in there too!

From this project you'll see monthly updates in the Mustang Times that hopefully will answer your particular concerns or questions on Mustang production facts and other interesting tidbits about our ponies. In addition, a series of full-length Mustang production reference books called the Mustang Production Guide(s), are currently in the writing stage.

All you need to do to participate is fill in the blanks below. The information can be found on a metal plate (1964 1/2-69) or vinyl sticker (1970-73), found on your driver's door near the latch. If there is no plate or sticker, just the serial number is adequate. Total information is very important. Feel free to enclose the history on your Mustang(s).

Name: _____
 Address: _____

Mustang # 1. Year _____ Is it a GT, MACH 1, T-5, etc. _____
 Warranty/Serial Number _____
 Body _____ Color _____ Trim _____ Date _____ DSO _____ Axle _____ Trans _____

Mustang # 2. Year _____ Is it a GT, MACH 1, T-5, etc. _____
 Warranty/Serial Number _____
 Body _____ Color _____ Trim _____ Date _____ DSO _____ Axle _____ Trans _____

Mustang # 3. Year _____, Is it a GT, MACH 1, T-5, etc. _____
 Warranty/Serial Number _____
 Body _____ Color _____ Trim _____ Date _____ DSO _____ Axle _____ Trans _____

Thanks for participating in this project. If you desire a reply, please enclose a SASE. Send all information to:

IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS

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

Seems easy enough. If my 1968 Mustang has a month code of A through M it was assembled in 1967 and it's N through Z it was assembled in 1968, right?

Wrong, or at least not necessarily.

For the 1966 through 1973 model years, production normally began in July or August of the previous year (August, 1967 for the 1968's for example). These received either a 'G' month code for July or an 'H' for August. Okay, so far. In September of that same model year, all Mustangs would have a 'J' month code; then K, L and M for Oc-

tober, November, December. Still okay.

Now for the surprises. January, 1968 should get an 'N' for the second year code, right? Wrong! January assembled Mustangs received an 'A,' another first year code. Same in February; a 'B' code was assigned. And a 'C' in March, a 'D' in April, etc. This trend of using the first year code for the second years' production continued — until July of the second year. Suddenly, on July 1, the coding system switched to the second year code ('U' for July, 'V' for August). Is this getting confusing?

The explanation is simple though the charts are not. Ford didn't want to use the same month code letter for a single model year. Therefore, when the second year's assembly month came back around to the startup month of the previous year, the coding system switched from the first to the second years' code. If a given model years' production started in July (with a 'G'), then any July production in the following year would carry a 'U' month code and August Mustangs a 'V' code. Similarly, if production didn't start until August (with an 'H' of course), then any Mustangs of the same

model year assembled the following August would receive a 'V' month code.

Hindsight is always 20-20, but wouldn't it have been less confusing to simply use the 1965 model year chart (the first one in this update) for subsequent model years? All you'd have to do is change the years. There wouldn't be any of this first year/second year stuff and everything would be in one column.

Oh well, if the date codes were perfectly clear it would be something else; like a DSO code that wasn't in the "book," or a blank color code, or a fastback with an '08' body code, etc.

It's likely no one will ever be able to answer all the question sposed by the Mustang hobby around the world. But let's all keep trying.

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