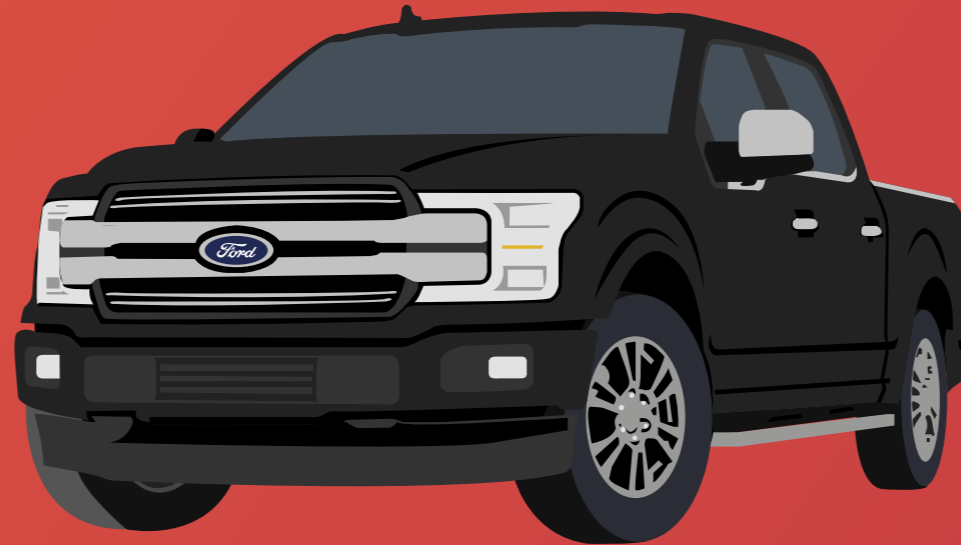# The Challenges of VIN Decoding Light-Duty Trucks

Light-duty trucks can be challenging to decode by VIN pattern alone. Here are some of the data points that are particularly difficult to identify and require a comprehensive database to do so.

Vehicle Example: 2020 Ford F-150 Lariat 4dr SuperCrew 5.5 ft. SB

TRIM

Trim is encoded in some passenger vehicles, however, it is rarely, if ever, encoded in light-duty trucks. Many light-duty trucks, including the Ford F-150, offer several different trims that can drastically vary in price. For example, the 2020 Ford F-150 XL Supercrew 5.5 ft SB starts at $35,285, while the F-150 Limited Supercrew 5.5 ft SB starts at $67,735. The example shown starts at $45,110.

TRANSMISSION

Depending on the manufacturer and model year, transmission can be tricky to determine by VIN pattern alone. While the F-150 is not the best example, as most of their engine options (identified by VIN pattern) only offer one corresponding transmission, this is not the case for other major light-duty truck manufacturers. For example, the 2019 Chevrolet Colorado offers two transmission options (automatic and manual) for the 2.5L I4 engine.

BED LENGTH

5.5 ft. SB

While cab type is encoded in the VIN pattern, the bed length is not. This makes it particularly difficult to narrow down a VIN pattern to one vehicle style, given that each trim offers 2-3 different bed lengths and not all bed lengths are available with every cab type or trim.

AXLE RATIO

3.55

Axle ratio is another important datapoint that is not encoded in the VIN pattern. Axle ratio is typically a stand alone option that varies based on engine, transmission, and drive type.