How to identify a Volvo Penta gas engine

Several methods have been used to provide the engines with unique names. Some were based on horsepower ratings. More recent names are based on the displacement of the engine in liters. Each time the name was changed, it was due to some change in the parts content of the engine. Sometimes the changes were minor, sometimes they were major. The changes may or may not affect the parts that you need for a repair. The safest method is to always search with the complete product name.

There are three distinct periods of gas engine production, each with a different naming method. Each is explained below;

Red Engines, early

Very early engines, built until the late 1980's, were named based on the displacement (early) or horsepower (later) of the engines. The name started with AQ (sterndrive engine), BB (inboard) or MB (inboard). Next came the number for the displacement or horsepower. Most of these also included a one letter suffix, for version control. An AQ271A is older (and different) than a AQ271B.

EXAMPLES: AQ260A, AQ171C, AQ200F, BB260A

These engine names then changed to a system based on displacement. The names were a three digit number, followed by a letter. The first two digits of the number represented the displacement. The 43 in 434A meant the engine was a 4.3L. The third digit was used for model control. A 430 and a 431 are both 4.3L's, however the last digit indicates there is difference between the engines. The numbers at the third digit were not always sequential. 430's were built before 431's, however 432's and 434's were buit at the same time.

The letter at the end was also used for version control and was sequential. A 500A was built before a 500B.

These engines went out of production in 1993.

EXAMPLES: 432A, 500B, 251A, 740B

Nothing in the names in either of these sytems relates in any way to years of production. Some of these engines were in production for less than a year, others for many years.

Charcoal Engines

These engines were built during the joint venture with OMC and were painted a dark charcoal color. They were usually named by long character strings that contain two numbers followed by a series of letters.

- The two numbers are the displacement.
- Next is a letter that indicates who made the base engine.
  G=GM, F=Ford
- After that, one or two letters that note the fuel system and/or output.
  L=limited, S=superior, X=exceptional, i or I=fuel injected (no "I" means carburetted)
- Then one letter for the steering system.
  P=power steering, M=manual steering, X=exact steering, I=inboard

- The next two letters are the most important for finding parts. These are random letter pairs that indicate the years of production for the engine. All parts information for these engines is based on these letter codes, including the charts that follow later in the book.

MD = 1993-1994	BY = 1997-1998
HU = 1994-1995	WT = 1998-1999
NC = 1995-1996	EF = 1999-2000
LK = 1996-1997	

- The next letter is also random and is used for version control. An "A" may not be the first version. A "C" may not have been built before an "S". An "S" in one engine's name may not mean the same thing as an "S" in another engine's name, especially if the engines have different displacements or production years. When needed this code is noted in the charts. There are instances where it is needed to find the right column for an engine.
- Some names have the letters "CE" at the end. This indicates the engine meets certain emmission requirements. The only service part affected is the ECU. These part numbers are noted when needed in the catalogs.

These engines went out of production in 2000.

EXAMPLES:

4.3GLPBYC = 4.3L, G=GM, L=limited output, carburetted (no "i"), P=power steering, BY=model year, C=service code for version control

5.8FSiPNCACE = 5.8L, Ford, Superior output, injected, power steering, NC=model year, A service code, certified emmissions

7.4GLPHUS = 7.4L, GM, limited output, carburetted, power steering, HU=model year, S service code

3.0GLMMDA = 3.0L, GM, limited output, carburetted, manual steering, MD=model year, A service code

Red Engines, current

Beginning in 2000 the gas engines are painted red again. The naming system was also changed. The first part of the name is the same as the charcoal engines, up to the letters for the fuel system.

- The two numbers are the displacement.
- Next is a letter that indicates who made the base engine. New engines have been added that use Volvo Penta's new Ocean Series sterndrives, these engines have an OS for this letter.
- After that, one or two letters that note the fuel system and/or output.
- For 3.0L only, there is an M or P for the steering
- For Inboard engines only, there is an I after the lower case i.

· Then a dash (-) followed by a one or two letter suffix. This is the major change from the charcoal engines above.
The first letter is the version control, this is present on all models. -A is the first version, -B was the second version, etc.... There is no link between the suffix and production years. All engines with -A were not built the same year. A 5.7GXi-B and a 5.0GXi-B are not similar. A 4.3GL-D is newer than and different from a 4.3GL-C.
The second letter, if present is always an F, it notes that the engine is freshwater cooled.
EXAMPLES: 3.0GLM-C, 4.3GXi-DF, 5.0OSi-E, 8.1GXiI-B

How to identify a Volvo Penta diesel engine

The diesel engines have also used several naming methods. They are not as varied as the gas engine names, plus there are fewer engines listed in each column in the chart. The complete engine name can usually be found in the chart, many times in a separate column. If you use the entire name, including any suffixes, the parts should be easy to find.

The diesel names are also a combination of letters and numbers. As a guideline, the following code letters are used to name the diesel engines;

Before the number

D = diesel
M = marine
A – aftercooler
T = turbocharged
H = horizontal
K = compressor
AQ = engine equipped for a sterndrive

Number

Used to show displacement, horsepower or number of cylinders

After the number

The letters after the number are used for version control.
Before dash (-)
These note different use ratings, such as pleasure, leisure, etc.... In some cases in the column headers you will see version letters separated by a "/" (example TAMD41P/L/M/H –A, this means all of these versions of TAMD41 are covered by that column).
- or –
They are sequential, A, B, C, etc....

After dash (-)
These are sequential, A, B, C, etc...

The important thing is to know the engine name and use the complete name when trying to locate the engine in the table of contents or the charts.