

PASSING GAS



Here's the header and exhaust kit as delivered by Gibson Performance Exhaust. Our application uses dual catalytic converters, hence the twin headpipes into the muffler.

Easy exhaust upgrade

Just as improving airflow into your rig's engine can help improve horsepower and torque, improving the exhaust flow out of your engine can help as well. One way to do that is a simple, free-flowing bolt-on aftermarket exhaust system.

Our '99 Tahoe's 5.7L engine had lost some of its spunk after we installed 35-inch-diameter tires, so it needed a quick power enhancement. We called the folks over at Gibson Performance Exhaust, who recommended a simple, yet functional swap to their headers and after-cat exhaust.

We opted for their dyno-tuned stainless steel headers. Gibson says that they're engineered to deliver more horsepower and torque at low- and mid-range rpm highway speeds. They're constructed of mandrel-bent heavy-duty 16-gauge tubing with heavy-duty 3/8-inch thick laser-cut port flanges that help to ward off warping and leaking. The header kit includes new hardware and gaskets and detailed instructions.

Underneath the truck, we chose to install Gibson's aluminized 3-inch-diameter Swept Side after-cat exhaust system. This single-exit system is designed to enhance power in the 1,800- to 3,000-rpm range. The after-cat exhaust system for our application included dual headpipes, Superflow muffler, overaxle tailpipe, exit pipe, 3/8-inch stainless-steel tip, clamps, converter flange gasket and instructions.

The install was straightforward and easy, and the parts fit perfectly. Total install time was less than four hours. Now our Tahoe is really passing gas.

1 The first step to installing the headers is to remove the stock exhaust manifolds. To access them, remove any items that are in the way, including the spark-plug wires and dipstick. We also removed the airbox. Sometimes the fasteners that hold the manifolds to the head and to the exhaust pipe can be difficult to remove and may even break, but ours came right out after being doused with penetrating oil. After removing the manifolds, it's important to unbolt the spark-plug-wire looms from the cylinder heads. If this isn't done, the header flange will not seal against the head. On the driver side, the EGR hose connects to the rear of the manifold, and will



have to be removed. We found out that this can be tricky due to tight confines created by the firewall.

2 After thoroughly cleaning the mounting surfaces for the new headers, they can be installed. Remember to apply a thin coat of O₂ sensor-friendly high-temperature sealant to both sides of the header gaskets and the dome flanges, and anti-seize compound to the fasteners.

3 We found that the trickiest part of the header install is reinstalling the EGR hose to the new driver-side header. General Motors put the hose in a location that is difficult to access, so patience and a little luck are needed to make the attachment. The last step of the header install is to attach the header to the bottom flange.





4 To install the after-cat exhaust, remove the stock exhaust system. Begin by removing the O₂ sensor from the stock headpipe. It's easy to remove the exhaust if you cut it with a Sawzall. We cut the headpipes between the muffler and the catalytic converters. Leave all of the rubber exhaust mount grommets in place. For easier removal of the hangers, spray them with a lubricant.

5 The installation of the new system is easy. Simply follow the Gibson instructions and piece the system together. Don't forget to reinstall the O₂ sensor into the new headpipe and use high-temp O₂-safe silicone on the threads to prevent leaks.

6 You'll leave all of the exhaust components loose until everything is installed on the vehicle. After ensuring that all of the exhaust components have at least 1 inch of clearance from shocks, leaf springs and so on, tighten everything up and you're good to go. Gibson recommends checking all fasteners, especially the header bolts, after 200 miles.

SOURCE

Gibson Performance Exhaust

Dept. F6, 1270 Webb Ct., Corona, CA 92679, 800/529-3644,
www.gibsonperformance.com

