One thing that serves as a savior of sorts for the truck market is the fact that while there were a handful of different options available (1/2-ton, 3/4-ton, short wheelbase, long wheelbase, etc), the sheetmetal on most of these trucks was identical from the cab forward. The chassis’ were all relatively similar, enough so that a 3/4-ton long bed can be cut down to 1/2-ton specs and the same upgraded suspension components used throughout. With the amount of sheetmetal components being reproduced today, a new short bed is simply a phone call away. A few simple modifications and a couple bucks can turn a bargain find $2500 long bed pickup into a pretty decent foundation for a short bed build. Doing the same thing with a 4-door passenger car isn’t really an option, which is what keeps those sought after 2-door prices high. Those poor guys don’t have the options that we do and that’s one of the reasons the truck market is so strong today.

Yet while it’s been a popular solution for many years, no one stepped up and made a kit for the DIY guy to shorten one in his driveway. Until now.

Jim and Steve Flanders, the brothers behind Brothers Trucks, spearheaded the recent campaign to create a template that enables the average truck enthusiast to “make the cut” on their ‘63-72 C10 using.

**SIMPLE C10 SHORTBED CONVERSION**

A Bolt-In Option To Transform A 1963-1972 Chevy Longbed

*by Ryan Manson*

**SOURCES**

**BROTHERS MAIL ORDER INDUSTRIES**

(800) 977-2767  
www.brotherstrucks.com

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01 Toshi Akatsuka’s truck is a great example of the typical longbed C10 find; a little rough, but a good, solid, affordable option.
simple hand tools. A drill, a couple drill bits, a method to cut the framerail cleanly, and a few handtools are all that’s required to take that low buck work truck and turn it into a short bed canyon carver. Having access to a welder and a skilled operator is helpful, but Brothers designed their kit so that it could be fully assembled in a one-car garage and then trailerd to a local welder if need be to complete the assembly.

What makes the Brothers Trucks’ kit nice is the fact that you don’t need to know chassis specs, take any measurements, setup wheelbase plumb bob marks on the shop floor, none of that. Using existing holes in the chassis to locate the template, it’s literally a matter of drilling a few holes and cutting through the scored lines on the template to cut down the frame. A pair of C-channel braces are then bolted to the two halves, creating a single chassis that can then be welded together. It was so simple in fact, that Steve kept reminding me that it wasn’t necessary to bust out a tape measure every step of the way as the template would do the job. When it was all said and done, I couldn’t resist my natural tendency to check things five times and measured the final assembly; it was within 1/16 of an inch. Color me impressed. Follow along and see if you don’t agree. And who knows, that clapped out farm truck down the road might just be the best option for your next classic truck project.

02 Brothers Mail Order Industries’ shortbed kit consists two thin-walled C-channel templates, two 3/16-inch walled C-channel inner brace, hardware, e-brake cable, and rear brake line (not pictured). The template is clearly marked with numbered holes that are used to locate and attach the template to the frame, lettered holes used to locate the new rear cab mounts, pilot holes used to locate the C-channel’s mounting points, cut lines for all three necessary cuts, and another numbered hole that will serve to locate the rear bed mount once the end of each framerail is trimmed.

03 Before we start cutting, there are a handful of items that need to be removed or modified. Since the entire rear suspension setup will be moved forward 12 inches, the two-piece driveshaft will be removed and added to the scrap pile along with the rear brake line. The exhaust will need to be removed and modified or replaced. Emergency brake cables are also removed and will be replaced with shorter items. Note the fuel line that has been moved away from the framerail. Special attention needs to be paid to the fuel line at all times if it’s not removed.

04 Next, the bed is removed.

05 Before we make a single spark, the truck is set on jackstands so that when the rear half of the chassis is removed, the rest of the truck remains stable.

06 An additional set of jackstands are used to support the rear of the cab as we’re going to be removing the rear cab mount ...

07 ... as well as the front bed mount. To do so, the head of each rivet is chiseled off and then punched free.

08 The templates are designed to bolt to the chassis using existing holes (labeled T), removing any guesswork when it comes time to make the cut.

09 Before we do so, however, a series of six pilot holes need to be drilled into each framerail. These will serve as mounting points for the C-channel inner brace.
Using a reciprocating saw, the first, forward cut is made using the etched line in the template.

Next the template needs to be used to drill the new cab mount holes. To do so, the top and bottom needs to be trimmed to clear the rivets holding the crossmember in place. Another set of pre-cut, etched lines mark the portion to be removed.

Once both sides are cut, the rear portion of the chassis is simply rolled back out of the way.

The templates remain attached to the rear portion of the frame so that the second cut can be made.

With the second cut complete, we’ve successfully removed the extra 12 inches from the wheelbase. Next, the six pilot holes are drilled larger to suit the 3/8-inch fasteners for the C-channel inner brace.

There are eight holes total, labeled either “A” for 1963-1966 or “B” for 1967-1972 trucks, that are used to locate the new rear cab mount. Using the front most pair, the template is aligned with the rear two holes from the original cab mount. The location of the rear pair of holes on the template are then transferred to the chassis.
With the new shortbed in place, Akatsuka’s work truck is starting to look a lot sharper. Now, about that stance and those wheels and tires ...

The cab mount is then bolted in place using these new holes and then used as a template for the rear pair.

Here, the cab mount and C-channel inner brace are both attached to the rear half of the frame. Note that the two front holes from the original cab mount location are used to attach the inner brace.

Next, the two frame halves are rejoined via the inner brace and welded together.

Out back, we need to trim 8 inches from the back of the frame and drill a handful of holes. Flush with the back of the framerail the template is used to transfer the location of the rear bed mount hole as well as to scribe the cutline.

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A watchful eye and a steady hand and the chassis conversion is complete.

Akatsuka’s original bed was pretty beat, so instead of trying to cut and weld it back together, he opted to purchase new sheetmetal from Brothers. We were definitely thankful as the new panels fell into place and fit great. Because the bedsides are double walled, this makes cutting and splicing the bed back together a lot of work. Nearly 20 linear feet worth of welding is required as is a few hours of bodywork, depending on one’s skill.