AutoLens Vehicle Issue Report

Compiled from verified owner reports, expert repair sources, manufacturer TSBs and community forums.

Vehicle

2020 Chevrolet Equinox

Trim

1.5T LT AWD

Last Updated

September 2025

Version

1.0

Q Overview

The 2020 Chevrolet Equinox 1.5T LT AWD is a compact SUV offering all-wheel drive and a turbocharged engine. While generally praised for its comfortable ride and fuel efficiency, it has notable reliability concerns, particularly with its 1.5L engine and transmission. DIY-friendliness is moderate for basic maintenance, and parts availability is good due to its widespread presence.

Reliability

DIY Friendliness

Parts Availability

Good

Common Issues Breakdown

Cracked Piston / Turbocharger Issues

Likelihood: ★★★★ High

\$1,800-\$6,000+

Symptoms:

Engine rebuild or replacement needed, cracked piston, turbocharger stopping intermittently and going into limp mode, reduced power, engine misfires, unusual noises, engine growling and slow to start.

Cause:

Issues with the 1.5L turbo engine, including pre-detonation and internal component failure in the turbocharger.

How It Affects Ownership:

Major mechanical failure leading to costly repairs or vehicle disablement. This is a significant reliability concern that can render the vehicle inoperable.

When It Typically Occurs:

Cracked pistons have been reported as early as 29,000 miles, while turbocharger issues can occur at various mileages, with some instances around 90,000 miles.

How to Spot on a Used Vehicle:

Listen for unusual engine noises (knocking, growling). Check for reduced power or a 'limp mode' indicator. Look for excessive smoke from the exhaust. A pre-purchase inspection by a mechanic familiar with GM 1.5L turbo engines is highly recommended.

Urgency: • **High** – These are critical engine failures that can lead to complete vehicle breakdown and pose a safety risk. Immediate attention is required.

DIY Difficulty: 🌣 🌣 🌣

Repair Time: 8–40 hours (Turbocharger replacement: 8-12 hours; Engine rebuild/replacement: 20-40+ hours, potentially longer if parts are scarce).

Parts Needed: Pistons, piston rings, turbocharger assembly, engine gaskets, various engine components.

Estimated Cost: \$1,800–\$6,000+ (Turbocharger replacement: \$1,800–\$2,148; Engine rebuild/replacement: \$2,500–\$6,000+).

Likelihood: ★★★★☆

Helpful Links:

- Facebook 2020 Equinox 1.5T Cracked Pistons
- MotorVerso GM 1.5 Turbo Engine Problems
- Consumer Reports 2020 Chevrolet Equinox Reliability (Cracked Piston)
- YouTube Chevy 1.5L and 1.4L Major Engine Problem
- Facebook 2020 Equinox LT AWD Bad Turbo

Oil Leaks / Excessive Oil Consumption

Likelihood: ★★★★ (Medium) \$200-\$1,500

Symptoms:

Excessive oil consumption (requiring frequent top-offs, e.g., a quart every 3,100 miles), visible oil drops under the vehicle, burning oil smell, low oil levels on dipstick despite recent changes.

Cause:

Commonly attributed to low-tension piston rings in newer GM engines, clogged oil pump screens, or various gasket/seal failures (e.g., oil pan gasket, crank seal).

How It Affects Ownership:

Requires constant monitoring of oil levels and frequent top-offs, which can be inconvenient and costly over time. If ignored, it can lead to severe engine damage due to oil starvation. Environmental impact from leaks.

When It Typically Occurs:

Reported at relatively low mileages, with some owners noticing issues as early as 1,100 miles for leaks and around 34,000 miles for excessive consumption.

How to Spot on a Used Vehicle:

Check the dipstick for oil level and color. Look for oil stains on the ground where the vehicle is parked. Inspect

^

the engine bay for signs of oil residue or leaks, particularly around the oil pan and AC compressor. A burning oil smell during a test drive is also a red flag.

Urgency: • Medium – While not immediately critical, excessive oil consumption or leaks can lead to serious engine damage if not addressed. Regular monitoring and timely repairs are essential.

DIY Difficulty: 🌼 🌼

Repair Time: 2-8 hours (depending on the source and complexity of the leak; oil top-offs are minimal time).

Parts Needed: Engine oil, oil pan gasket, various seals, oil pump screen, or potentially more extensive engine components if damage has occurred.

Estimated Cost: \$200–\$1,500 (Oil pan gasket replacement: \$219–\$757; Oil pan replacement: \$392–\$700+; General oil leak fix: ~\$720. Higher end for more complex leaks or multiple issues. Oil consumption primarily involves the cost of oil for frequent top-offs).

Likelihood: ★★★★☆

Helpful Links:

- Facebook 2020 Equinox 1.5 Turbo Burning Oil
- Facebook 2020 Equinox 1.5T Oil Consumption
- YouTube 2019 Chevy Equinox LS 1.5 Turbo EcoTec Oil Consumption
- Chevy Equinox Forum Oil Leak
- Coloradofans.com Oil Consumption (Low Tension Piston Rings)

Transmission Issues

Likelihood: ★★★★ High \$150–\$4,000+

Symptoms:

Transmission going bad, fluid leaks, harsh shifting, delayed shifting, engine revving unusually high before engaging gear (shift flare), vehicle popping into Park unexpectedly, 'transmission needs to be serviced' message, check engine light.

Cause:

Internal transmission component failure, fluid leaks, or issues with the transmission control module. The 6-speed automatic transmission in some Equinox models has been noted for 'shift flare' characteristics.

How It Affects Ownership:

Major mechanical failure that can lead to complete vehicle breakdown, stranding the driver. Repairs are often very costly, potentially requiring a full transmission replacement, and pose significant safety concerns.

When It Typically Occurs:

Reported at various mileages, with some owners experiencing issues around 111,000 miles, often after other major repairs like turbocharger replacement. Some shift characteristics may be present earlier.

How to Spot on a Used Vehicle:

During a test drive, pay close attention to how the transmission shifts. Feel for harshness, delays, or slipping between gears. Listen for unusual noises during acceleration or deceleration. Check for any transmission-related warning lights on the dashboard. Inspect for transmission fluid leaks under the vehicle.

Urgency: • **High** – Transmission problems are critical and can lead to sudden loss of power or control, posing a severe safety risk. Immediate professional diagnosis and repair are essential.

DIY Difficulty: 🌣 🌣 🌣

Repair Time: 2-20 hours (Minor leak repair: 2-4 hours; Transmission rebuild/replacement: 16-20+ hours).

Parts Needed: Transmission fluid, gaskets, seals, internal transmission components, or a complete transmission assembly.

Estimated Cost: \$150-\$4,000+ (Minor leak repair: \$150-\$1,000; Transmission rebuild/replacement: \$3,000-\$4,000+).

Likelihood: ★★★★☆

Helpful Links:

- Facebook Chevy Equinox Transmission Problems (111k miles)
- Facebook Chevy Equinox Transmission Fluid Leak
- Facebook Chevy Equinox Delayed Shifting
- TerrainForum.net 18-19 Equinox Transmission Issue (Shift Flare)
- CarGurus Chevy Equinox Transmission Died

Fuel System / Fuel Pump Issues

Likelihood: ★★★★★ High \$400–\$1,300

Symptoms:

Engine cranks but won't start, sputtering, complete failure to start, diagnostic trouble codes (DTCs) such as P129F (fuel system/sensor fault), P0087 (fuel rail/system pressure too low), or P12A6 (fuel pump enable circuit issue).

Cause:

Defective fuel pump modules, inadequate fuel flow to the engine, faulty fuel pump driver control modules, or issues leading to low fuel rail pressure. Some later model years have been subject to recalls for inadequate fuel pump flow.

How It Affects Ownership:

The vehicle can become completely inoperable, leading to inconvenient breakdowns and potentially stranding the driver. Repairs can be costly, involving the replacement of critical fuel system components.

When It Typically Occurs:

Can occur at various mileages, with some reports suggesting issues manifesting relatively early in the vehicle's lifespan.

How to Spot on a Used Vehicle:

^

Listen for the fuel pump priming sound when the ignition is turned on (a faint whirring from the rear of the vehicle). Check for any stored or active check engine light codes related to the fuel system. During a test drive, note any hesitation, sputtering, or loss of power, especially under acceleration.

Urgency: • **High** – Fuel system failures can prevent the vehicle from starting or operating reliably, posing a significant safety and convenience risk. Prompt diagnosis and repair are crucial.

DIY Difficulty: 🌼 🌼

Repair Time: 2-5 hours (Fuel pump replacement: 2-4 hours; Fuel pressure sensor: 1-2 hours).

Parts Needed: Fuel pump assembly, fuel pump control module, fuel pressure sensor, fuel filter.

Estimated Cost: \$400-\$1,300 (Fuel pump replacement: \$400-\$1,200+; High-pressure fuel pump: \$700-

\$1,300; Fuel pressure sensor: \$151-\$220).

Likelihood: ★★★☆☆

Helpful Links:

- GM Authority Chevy Equinox Recalled For Inadequate Fuel Pump Flow (Note: for 2021/2022 models, but indicates ongoing issue)
- YouTube 2021-2024 Chevy Equinox GMC Terrain Fuel Pump Replacement
- JustAnswer 2020 Chevy Equinox P129F Code
- CarParts.com P0087 Code: Fuel Rail/System Pressure Too Low
- Reddit 2020 Chevy Equinox Starting Problems (P12A6)

In-car Electronics Malfunctions

Likelihood: ★★★★ (Medium) \$0-\$1,000

Symptoms:

Android Auto or Apple CarPlay not working or experiencing intermittent connectivity, infotainment display screen going blank, system freezing, or audio and navigation functions not operating simultaneously.

Cause:

Software glitches, corrupted firmware, wiring issues, or hardware failures within the infotainment unit or display screen. Sometimes, a simple system reboot can resolve temporary issues.

How It Affects Ownership:

Leads to a frustrating user experience, loss of convenient navigation and entertainment features. A blank display can be distracting and potentially unsafe if critical vehicle information is obscured.

When It Typically Occurs:

These issues can manifest at any mileage and are often intermittent, sometimes appearing after software updates or without a clear trigger.

How to Spot on a Used Vehicle:

During a test drive, connect a smartphone to test Android Auto/Apple CarPlay functionality. Operate all

infotainment features, including radio, navigation, and Bluetooth. Observe the display for any flickering, blanking, or unresponsiveness. Check for any stored error messages related to the infotainment system.

Urgency: • Medium – While often an inconvenience, critical failures can impact safety (e.g., loss of backup camera display or navigation). Should be addressed to restore full functionality and reduce distraction.

DIY Difficulty: 🔅

Repair Time: 1-4 hours (Software fixes: 1-2 hours; Screen replacement: 2-4 hours).

Parts Needed: Infotainment unit, display screen, wiring harness, software updates.

Estimated Cost: \$0–\$1,000 (Software updates/reprogramming: \$0–\$200; Screen replacement: \$300–\$1,000, depending on parts and labor. Some issues might be covered under warranty).

Likelihood: ★★★☆☆

Helpful Links:

- Consumer Reports 2020 Chevrolet Equinox Reliability (In-car Electronics)
- TerrainForum.net 2020 Equinox LT Black Radio Screen
- Monument Chevrolet What To Do When Chevy Apple CarPlay Is Not Working
- Applegate Chevrolet Chevy Infotainment System Not Working Troubleshooting Guide
- Chevy Equinox Forum 2020 Equinox Infotainment Problem

K Summary Table

Issue	Likelihood	DIY Difficulty	Cost	Time	Urge
Cracked Piston / Turbocharger Issues	****	High	\$1,800-\$6,000+	8-40 hrs	High
Oil Leaks / Excessive Oil Consumption	****	Medium	\$200-\$1,500	2-8 hrs	Med
Transmission Issues	****	High	\$150-\$4,000+	2-20 hrs	High
Fuel System / Fuel Pump Issues	***	Medium	\$400-\$1,300	2-5 hrs	High
In-car Electronics Malfunctions	***	Low	\$0-\$1,000	1–4 hrs	Med

Additional Resources

External Resources

Consumer Reports: 2020 Chevrolet Equinox Reliability

Facebook Group: Chevy Equinox Transmission Problems

Chevy Equinox Forum

NHTSA Complaints: 2020 Chevrolet Equinox

Reddit: r/Chevy - 2020 Equinox Discussions



Disclaimer

Important Notice

This report is based on public community data, service bulletins, and third-party content. Actual issues may vary depending on vehicle condition, trim, maintenance history, and driving habits. Use this report as a reference—not a diagnostic tool. Always consult a certified mechanic before purchase.