



# CUSTOM BUILT



**vs.**

# WORK READY



A Mechanic Truck Decision Guide for Fleet Managers



# FINDING YOUR FIT

Selecting the right mechanic truck for your fleet can be a daunting task. From body size and crane capacity to storage, lighting and accessory options, there are countless decisions to make. Fleet managers often weigh whether a pre-built, work-ready truck or a fully custom-built unit is the best fit.

Work-ready models offer speed and simplicity, while custom-built trucks provide flexibility, added durability and the ability to optimize your fleet's workflow. This guide breaks down the options side by side and also explores key questions to ask, lifecycle and ROI considerations, resale outlook and even semi-custom solutions that give you the benefits of both approaches.





# SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON

## Which Mechanic Truck Is Right for Your Fleet?

Use this comparison chart to quickly see how work-ready and custom-built mechanic trucks stack up. Evaluate factors like availability, cost, productivity and long-term value to determine which option best fits your fleet's needs.

|                                           | WORK READY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | CUSTOM BUILT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Definition</b>                         | Pre-engineered, standardized body and crane package built on a widely used chassis (often Class 3–5) and delivered quickly                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Body and crane package built from the ground up for specific fleet needs by working with a distributor and directly with a manufacturer                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Best For</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General maintenance</li><li>• Utility service</li><li>• Light equipment repair</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specialized jobs</li><li>• Harsh climates</li><li>• Long-term investment</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Advantages</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Immediate availability</li><li>• Known upfront pricing</li><li>• Built in advance of tariffs (may not apply to newer chassis) and upcoming chassis emissions charges</li><li>• Easier quoting and ordering</li><li>• Fleet standardization simplifies training and parts inventory</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tailored for operator productivity through accessory integration (storage, air compressor, lube skid, power unit)</li><li>• Built for demanding environments</li><li>• Supports advanced technology (electrification, telematics)</li><li>• Strengthens brand identity with custom paint or decaling</li></ul> |
| <b>Lifecycle &amp; ROI Considerations</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lower upfront cost, faster deployment</li><li>• May require retrofits if work evolves</li><li>• Optimized for shorter fleet cycles (5–7 years)</li></ul>                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Higher upfront cost, longer lead times</li><li>• Optimized for longer fleet cycles (8–10 years)</li><li>• Lower risk of unplanned downtime due to purpose-built specs</li></ul>                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Resale Outlook</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Standardized specs = wider buyer pool</li><li>• Smooth resale process</li><li>• Best for fleets planning 5–7 year cycles</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong if maintained, but narrower buyer pool</li><li>• Higher long-term value for full-lifecycle fleets</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                           | <b>Turnkey packages are typically available in days rather than months.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Some manufacturers offer 4,000+ possible combinations to help fleets get a truck built exactly how they need it.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |





# KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN SELECTING A MECHANIC TRUCK

Before deciding on a work-ready or custom-built mechanic truck, it helps to ask the right questions. Consider how your fleet operates, the demands of your jobsites and the long-term goals for your service vehicles.

## **What kind of work will my truck do every day?**

Standard trucks may suffice for general maintenance or routine field service, but specialized tasks — like heavy lifting, multiple accessory operation or unique jobsite demands — may call for a custom build.

## **How often and how hard will the truck be used?**

Daily, high-demand operations in harsh weather or rough terrain can benefit from a custom solution built to last. Backup or occasional-use trucks may not require the same level of specialization.

## **Are there local regulations to consider?**

Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) limits, emissions rules and Commercial Driver's License (CDL) requirements all influence your choice. Some work-ready trucks meet these needs, while custom builds may be necessary for more specific compliance.

## **Do operators have unique storage or workflow needs?**

Custom configurations can optimize tool storage, reduce strain and improve efficiency if your team uses specialized equipment or needs a tailored layout.

## **How often will I replace my fleet?**

If your trucks rotate every 5–7 years, a work-ready model that's ready to deploy and built for common tasks can be the most practical choice. For vehicles expected to last 10+ years, a custom-built truck designed for durability, efficiency and long-term performance may deliver the best value.

## **What's my budget and timeline?**

Cost and lead time are critical. Work-ready trucks offer faster delivery and known pricing, while custom builds may take longer but deliver a solution perfectly suited to your operation.

## **How can I compare work-ready vs. custom?**

Explore manufacturers' resources, including online configurators or 3D build tools, to see how different specifications affect cost, availability and functionality. This helps you make a more informed decision tailored to your fleet's needs.



# THE HYBRID OPTION: SEMI-CUSTOM MECHANIC TRUCKS

Semi-custom trucks combine the best of both worlds: the speed and reliability of a work-ready vehicle with the flexibility of limited customization. Fleet managers can start with a pre-engineered, in-stock truck and add select accessories or alterations to better fit their operation — whether that's specialized storage, lighting or equipment placement.

**This approach lets you:**

- Deploy quickly with a truck that's already built and tested
- Tailor key features to better meet operator needs
- Balance cost and functionality without committing to a full custom build

Semi-custom solutions are ideal for fleets that want some personalization while keeping lead times and procurement simple.







# WORK-READY OR FULLY CUSTOM — YOUR FLEET, YOUR WAY

When it comes to mechanic trucks, the right partner can make all the difference. Look for a manufacturer that offers both work-ready inventory for immediate deployment and fully custom-built capabilities to match specialized fleet needs. Explore offerings online or in person at trade shows like Work Truck Week and CONEXPO, where you can see the latest solutions and connect with experts. With year-end approaching, partnering with a supplier that has work-ready inventory can help you take advantage of Section 179 tax incentives — potentially over \$1 million in write-offs.

Stellar has been serving the mechanic truck market for 35 years with American-made, reliable solutions. Whether your fleet needs turnkey efficiency or a fully tailored build, our team and nationwide distributor network are ready to help you maximize productivity and ROI.

Call Stellar at **800.321.3741** or **contact us now** to get started.

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