STELLAR®

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 greater flexibility and the ability to optimize productivity around the way your crews work. This guide breaks down the options side by side and 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
Definition	Industry-leading body and crane package (Class 3–7) 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
Best For	• General maintenance • Utility service • Equipment repair	• Specialized jobs • Harsh climates • Long-term investment
Advantages	• Immediate availability • Known upfront pricing • Easier quoting and ordering • Fleet standardization simplifies training and parts inventory	• Tailored for operator productivity through customizable storage, accessories and equipment integration (air compressor, lube skid, power unit) • Flexible compartment configurations support evolving needs • Built for demanding environments • Supports advanced technology (electrification, telematics and connected solutions) • Strengthens brand identity with custom paint or decaling
Lifecycle & ROI Considerations	• Lower upfront cost, faster deployment • May require retrofits if work evolves • Optimized for shorter fleet cycles (5–7 years)	• Higher upfront cost, longer lead times • Optimized for longer fleet cycles (8–10 years) • Lower risk of unplanned downtime due to purpose-built specs
Resale Outlook	• Standardized specs = wider buyer pool • Smooth resale process • Best for fleets planning 5–7 year cycles	• Strong if maintained, but narrower buyer pool • Higher long-term value for full-lifecycle fleets
	Turnkey packages are typically available in days rather than months.	**Some manufacturers offer 4,000+ possible combinations to help fleets get a truck built exactly how they need it.**

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 are well-suited for general maintenance and routine field service, but specialized tasks — like heavy lifting, multiple accessory operation or unique jobsite demands — often require the precision of a custom build and benefit from tailored equipment layouts and accessory integration designed around the application.

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 requires a tailored layout. With flexible storage options, integrated mounting rails and simplified wiring access, today's mechanic trucks can be configured to support the way your crews work.

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 enhancements to better fit their operation. Features like integrated compartment mounting rails, pre-drilled wiring access and a wide range of organization options make it easy to tailor the truck as needs evolve.

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, CONEXPO and more, where you can see the latest solutions and connect with experts. From work-ready inventory to fully customized solutions, partnering with the right supplier gives you the flexibility to act when it matters — including maximizing Section 179 tax incentives that can exceed $1 million.

For more than 35 years, Stellar has engineered mechanic trucks designed to help fleets work smarter and accomplish more. Whether you need the speed of a work-ready truck or the capabilities of a fully customized solution, our employee owners and nationwide distributor network are committed to helping you maximize productivity and get more from your investment.

Call Stellar at 877.987.3077 or contact us now to get started.

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