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The Cure for the Common Service Truck

Eight Reasons to Take a Capsule Instead of a Standard Body

by Loren Holman, General Manager

Whenever someone asks, we recommend they take a capsule. A capsule-style service body for their work truck, that is.

A capsule is a composite service body that rests inside the bed of a pickup. It offers multiple benefits for individual contractors and fleet managers compared to a standard service body, advantages that save time, money and headaches initially and over the long haul.

We offer both styles, but we almost always steer our customers to the capsule. Here's why.



Transferability

We could stop after this one.

Transferability – the ability to quickly and easily move a capsule body from one pickup to another – is huge.

Over-center latches on a capsule's four corners attach it to the pickup bed. They have cushions underneath the bedrail, and they rotate up to be secured with quick-release pins.

No holes drilled into the truck, no welding, no lost time. Simply set the body into the bed, rotate the latches up and bingo. Secure.

A service body, on the other hand, has to be bolted to a chassis at the least, and it often needs to be welded to the chassis, as well. It takes a lot of time work to turn that chassis into a service truck.

What that means is a capsule can be in or out of a pickup bed in half an hour or less. By comparison, it can take half a day to remove a service body from a chassis, and another

full day to secure it to a different one. It'll take even longer if any refurbishment is needed.

Say you have a 200-vehicle fleet and you're on a lease program. Every three years or so you switch your trucks out for new ones. You just lift each capsule out of its truck, set it into the new one and away you go. No upfitting needed and no additional costs. Takes half an hour per body, max.

Same goes for individual contractors. Let's say it's time to trade in your vehicle. First of all, you'll get better trade-in value on a pickup that still has the bed on it. Second, you won't have to pay for customization again. Third, you won't have to wait while the upfitting gets done.

Accessibility

The side panels on capsule models flip up completely to provide full-length accessibility. You'd need to open a bunch of covers to get the same access on a service body.



Customization

A capsule has a roof, so the interior is fully configurable just like a cargo van. If you want shelving, pull-out slides, a slide-out bed or just about anything else that'll make your life easier, it can be done.

A service body is a service body. Generally, it'll have six to eight basic side compartments, with maybe a shelf or two in them, and the bed is open. The compartments could be reconfigured, but it would take a lot of time and work. If someone wants a compartment bigger or smaller, for example, the whole body would need to be re-engineered.



Less Weight

Companies that are switching from service bodies to capsules consistently give one reason: weight.

Everything depends on the size of the unit, but in general the largest capsules weigh around 850 lbs. The smallest service bodies, meanwhile, weigh around 1,000 lbs.

Less weight means two things: you keep your vehicles under the magical 10,000 gross vehicle weight, and you don't spend as much on fuel. And in the fleet world, fuel savings can be dramatic when each unit is 150 lbs. lighter.

Lead Time

You want your service body ASAP? Yeah, um, not gonna happen. Capsules are more readily available than service bodies; you can get a capsule in two weeks or less, but you're looking at up to 10 for a service body.

Uptime

A composite capsule is going to last longer than even a steel service body. Why? Because it's protected inside the pickup truck bed.

With service bodies, 80 percent of damage occurs when a user backs into or sideswipes an obstacle, or when someone else collides with the pickup. It can take out an entire side of the service body. With a capsule, a collision will damage the truck body but leave the capsule untouched.

Let's put it this way – if you total your truck with a service body, you're out of business.



If you total your truck with a capsule, you simply lift it out of the damaged truck bed and set it into a rental or new pickup. Your downtime is a fraction of what it might have been.

Serial Use

You can use a capsule over and over again, every time you get a new vehicle. You'll be up and running in your new rig in a half hour or less. Capsules also last a long, long time. In fact, some manufacturers offer lifetime warranties. With a service body, once the vehicle is done, the body's pretty much done, too.

Acquisition Cost

Even though you're buying a vehicle with more raw material and labor input, 80 percent of the time a pickup is going to cost less than a chassis.

Manufacturers tend to incentivize pickup purchases because of the volume they sell. You can go to your fleet leasing company or your dealership and buy a pickup with \$10,000 worth of incentives. Try doing that on a chassis.



There's also the fact that dealers simply do not stock chassis like they do pickups. And when you order, you'll get the pickup much faster than the chassis. We've found this to be true across brands.

Get Your Fix

People in industries as diverse as energy, plumbing and telecommunications do well with standard service bodies on their work trucks all the time.

But they could be doing so much better with the cure for the common service body: the capsule. For your fleet or business, consider it a long-term health plan rather than a one-time fix.