



The all-new 2011 Ford Super Duty offers a new look and two new engines with best-in-class power and fuel economy. This work truck also delivers class-leading maximum payload and towing capacities.

Ford trucks are mean machines

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This B20 biodiesel compatible engine, according to Ford, also delivers class-leading fuel efficiency, which is up 18 per cent for pickups and 25 per cent for chassis cabs.

Manufacturers of heavy-duty trucks are not required to post fuel ratings, but Ford scheduled an 80-mile "fuel economy challenge" to demonstrate this improvement.

The winning journalist at our event achieved 34 mpg U.S. (41 miles per imperial gallon), but did so using some nutty hypermiling techniques, such as shutting off the engine numerous times during the drive (not recommended for obvious safety reasons).

Still, others achieved in the mid to high 20s (U.S.), demonstrating that with prudent driving, these big trucks can be surprisingly thrifty.

The gasoline engine also delivers some big improvements. Replacing the current 5.4-litre V8, the new E85 compatible 6.2-litre engine provides 385 hp and 405 lb/ft of torque (up 85 hp and 40 lb/ft).

It is also more fuel efficient, with an average improvement of 15 per cent. During our fuel challenge, I drove a gas-powered Super Duty, pulling off 18.4 miles per U.S. gallon (22 mpg here), not far off the winner who posted 19.2.

Both engines are mated to an all-new, heavy-duty TorqShift six-speed automatic, which was designed to handle the diesel's massive low-end torque.

This is all good news to the more than 90 per cent of Super Duty drivers who tow. The 2011 lineup offers best-in-class towing, with a maximum conventional towing capacity of 16,000 lbs (7,258 kg) and maximum fifth-wheel towing of 24,400 lbs (11,068 kg).

Payload is also best-in-class at 6,520 lbs. (2,958 kg), but like towing capacity, varies according to model, cab size, wheelbase and axle ratio.

Ford cites the F-450 as being able to tow a 24,400 lb. trailer up a six per cent grade at 47 mph (76 km/h), which is more than 50 per cent faster than the outgoing product. Sounds a bit far-fetched, but I rode shotgun while a Ford representative did just that up a steady grade.

Other trailering features include Hill Start Assist, which applies brakes to prevent rollback (works well with a 10,000-lb trailer), and Trailer Sway Control, which is integrated with Ford's AdvanceTrac and Roll Stability Control.

Whether hauling a load up a mountain, controlling it on the way down, or accel-

erating hard, the Power Stroke diesel was surprisingly quiet.

Improvements to the combustion system, structure of the compacted graphite iron block, and engineering of the single turbocharger all play a role. When idling, I could barely tell it was a diesel.

My final exercise for the event was an off-road course where I took an F-350 over boulders, up hills and through axle-deep muck.

Part way up a steep incline, I hung up on a particularly twisty bit with one back wheel in the air. I immediately engaged the electronic locking differential, eased on the gas, and the remaining wheel grabbed.

Climbing down what seemed like a cliff, Hill Descent Control was effective. With my foot off the brake, the truck held rock steady at a comfortable crawl, making it easy to pick my way around boulders and wheel-swallowing ruts.

There's still much more to the Super Duty lineup, such as the Live Drive Power Take Off (allowing you to operate ploughs, cement mixers and other equipment whenever the engine is running), and Ford Work Solutions, featuring an in-dash computer with Internet, radio-frequency tracking for real-time inventory, a telematics system to monitor and manage your fleet, and more.

Visit fordworksolutions.com for more info on this nifty mobile office. And visit showrooms this spring to find out how Ford has responded to the needs of its customers whose trucks are far more than just basic transportation.

(Ford F-Series Super Duty 2011 trucks at a glance)

BODY STYLE: full-size, heavy-duty pickup truck

DRIVE METHOD: front-engine, rear-drive and four-wheel-drive

ENGINES: 6.7-litre turbocharged diesel V8 (390 hp and 735 lb/ft of torque); 6.2-litre (gas) V8 (385 hp and 405 lb/ft of torque)

TOWING CAPACITY: up to 16,000 lbs/7,258 kg (conventional); up to 24,400 lbs/11,068 kg (fifth wheel)

PAYLOAD: up to 6,520 lbs/2,958 kg

FUEL ECONOMY: n/a

WEBSITE: www.ford.ca

PRICE: F-250 XL 4x2: Reg Cab \$35,499; Super Cab \$38,599; Crew Cab \$40,999 F-350 SRW XL 4x2: Reg Cab \$36,999; Super Cab \$39,599; Crew Cab \$41,299; F-450 XL 4x4 Crew Cab \$59,599

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