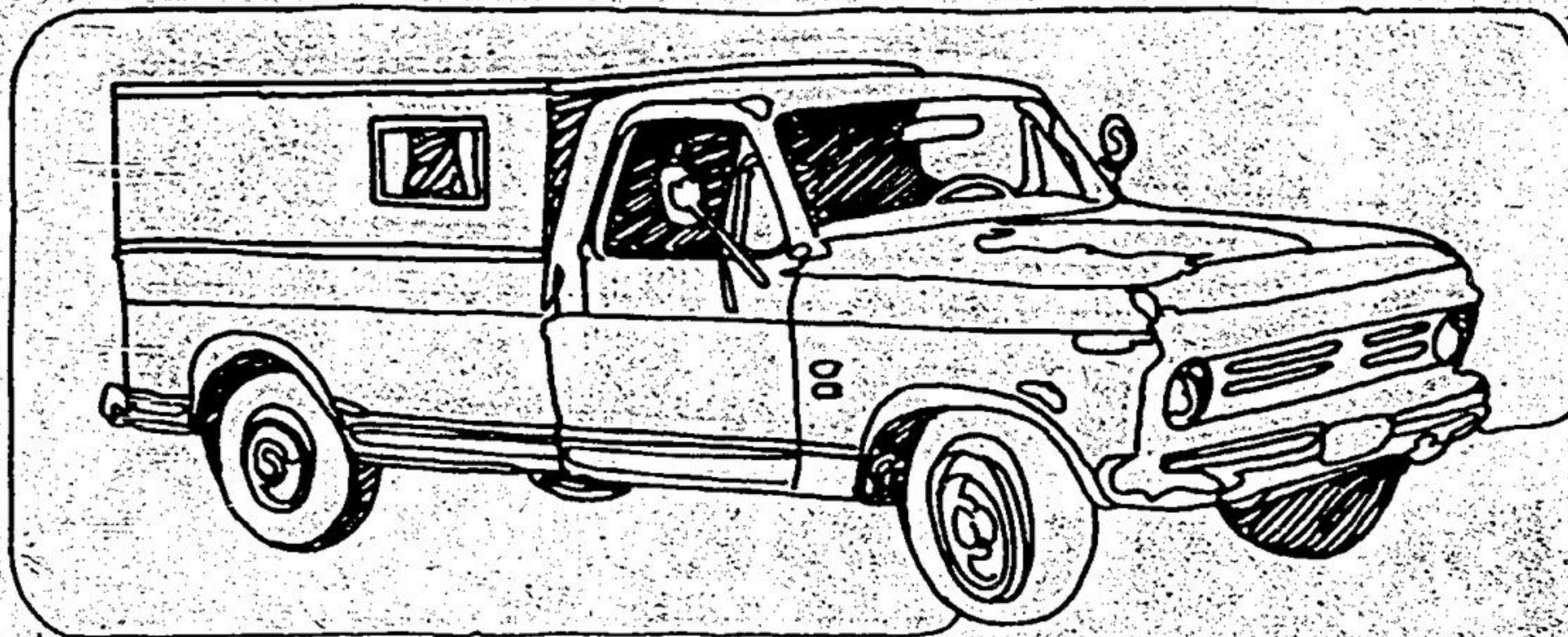


# Cab-high truck covers serve as camp caps

THOSE LITTLE cab-high enclosures on so many pickup trucks aren't really campers — technically, they're "caps," or "covers." In use, they provide lockable storage space for tools and materials for the tradesman or businessman, weatherproof hauling space for light perishable cargo, a capacious carryall for grocery shopping trips, or a means of transporting 10 Little Leaguers or 12 Cub Scouts on their appointed errands without the hazard of packing them all into the same car.



A typical example of the type of cab-high truck enclosure increasingly popular for camping.

Courtesy: Better Camping.

In some states, a pickup with a cap is eligible for a recreation vehicle license rather than a truck license — no small advantage. And many of these rigs do double as campers: some serve that purpose almost exclusively. In the vernacular, they are campers.

For campers to be usable, they have to be big enough to sleep in — and that's the hitch with pickups. The wheel housings stick out into the pickup box from both sides, reducing the sleeping width to a narrow aisle. For a single occupant, there's plenty of room — but who goes camping alone? Pop and Mom, if they're both small and on very good terms with each other, will get along all right. For a couple of husky fishermen, things start getting crowded, and for two beamy backwoods campers, in heavy winter-weight sleeping

bags — forget it! Besides, there's the problem of storing gear.

Whether you plan on fishing, traveling, or just camping and sightseeing, you'll have to have a certain amount of equipment — and this has to ride in the truck box. If you want to sleep in the rig, you'll have to move all this stuff every night. Some of it can be stacked outside, under the truck; if it's easily weather-damaged, it can be locked in the cab. Any way you do it, this nightly gear-juggling problem gets to be a real nuisance: it may even make some owners of these little campers feel like giving up and trading their rig for a full-size unit, or, alternatively, just staying home.

But there is a way to alleviate these problems. It won't cure them entirely, yet it will take most of the curse off them. At the same time, it will increase the utility

of the pickup camper for other purposes.

This simple solution? Put a deck in your camper. Fit it just above the wheel housings: This gives you six feet of sleeping width, give or take a few inches — plenty of room for two big men, only slightly cramped for three, and ample for two adults and a couple of kids. Essential gear can be stored under the deck, and nothing has to be moved when bedtime arrives.

Often needed equipment like the camp stove, the cook kit, and the food box can be stowed at the back, where it can be reached easily with the truck's tailgate lowered. And the deck is made in three sections, so the center part can be slid out for easy access to the front end of the truck box. At home, the center deck can be taken out, and the side decks left in place, to

provide seating accommodations for all those Cub Scouts and Little Leaguers — and how they love it!

The only disadvantage to the deck, such as it is, is the reduction in

headroom when used for sleeping. Older folks may find it a bit low for comfort when undressing or dressing, which most people prefer to do out of the public view when they're in a campground.

But a decked pickup is still a lot more spacious than the upper berth in a Pullman car used to be — if there's anybody still around who remembers when there were Pullman sleeping cars with upper

berths. The pickup is also more commodious than most modern station wagons, and people have been known to sleep in those.

(Courtesy: Better Camping)

## A good tent is camping must

FOR A FAMILY of tenters, the most expensive piece of equipment to buy is usually the family tent. As with any major investment, some research should be done before the purchase is made. Unfortunately, would-be purchasers often don't bother to compare important factors like quality of materials and

craftsmanship, because of the great number of family tents on the market. Too often, the price of the tent becomes the prime consideration to the inexperienced camper, and a bad experience with an inferior-quality tent that leaks, or quickly deteriorates, makes camping more frustrating than fun. This is unnecessary. There

are quality family tents available to fit every pocketbook.

The price of any tent should be commensurate with the amount of use — or abuse — that tent must withstand during a season. It would be foolish for the occasional camper to buy the best tent on the market. On the other hand, the average camper, who

goes out on a regular basis and for extended periods of time, should expect to pay for a tent of high enough quality to satisfy his needs. And the dedicated, diehard camper who heads for the outdoors every chance he gets can't afford anything but a top-quality tent, since he exposes his shelter to a wide variety of situations and weather conditions.



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