

Dump Tech

The Latest in Dump-Truck Technology for Pickup Trucks

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If you use your truck for hauling and dumping supplies, converting your empty bed into a full-blown dump truck with a quick-install insert could be the answer to your prayers. Today's inserts are compact, durable, and can pay for themselves in the long run.

While dump inserts designed for full-size or shortbed pickups have been around for years, recent technological advancements—such as light extruded bed flooring, multistage telescopic hydraulic cylinders, compact hydraulic pressure systems, and the use of high-

end materials like T-6 aluminum—have drastically changed this market for the better. Older dump-bed designs used thick steel plating to carry heavier loads, which resulted in a lower payload ability—the insert's weight comes out of the vehicle's overall GVW. For years, dump inserts were built with mild steel and painted to hide day-to-day abuse, but more inserts are now being made from a combination of aluminum and stainless steel for improved appearance and reduced weight. We recently went to Weingartz Supply in Farmington, Michigan, for a peek at

the newest in dump-bed technology. TruckCraft, one of the top dump-bed insert manufacturers, designed this unit, the TC-120 Ultra. It has a reinforced aluminum floor with extruded-aluminum side panels, which provide strength and cause it to weigh approximately 350 pounds less than the stainless-steel equivalent. Once installed, the insert sits only 3/4 inches above the bed. It can lift and extend to nine feet at an angle to completely empty its payload, but retracts (like a telescoping hydraulic jack) to less than three feet to save valuable storage room.



TruckCraft dump inserts use only two 5/8-inch-diameter grade-5 bolts to hold them in place. Both go through major portions of the pickup-truck-bed frame section. While the insert isn't going anywhere, it's easy to remove should the need arise.



The real magic of these compact workhorses is the small yet powerful hydraulic pump and cylinder systems that lift the dump bed up. The TC-120 Ultra insert can lift 7000 pounds to 47 degrees in 18 seconds.



Allowing wood chips, rocks, and other debris to build up is the most common reason for premature hydraulic-ram problems. Keep the area around the ram free of these non-compressible items.



If you're a DIY-er, installing a dump-bed insert can be performed in a backyard or garage in a few hours with basic hand tools. Many sales outlets also do installs. This base dump insert is just the dump bed, with no upgrades.

Costs and Features

Most dump-insert companies offer a basic version that can be personalized for utility and appearance. Base mild-steel inserts typically start around \$3500, aluminum/stainless-steel inserts around \$4500. Options include a cab protector, retractable mesh cover, utility rack, side panels, a leaf box, salt spreaders, and more. Weingartz Supply usually recommends an aluminum/stainless-steel dump insert—it looks and works better over the long haul and don't cost that much more to buy. TruckCraft models come with a three-year limited warranty.—A.S.



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Weingartz Supply installed a SlipStream cab guard, a popular option for the TC-120 Ultra. The SlipStream protects the cab from the insert's contents, while its expanded metal grille ensures that the added safeguard doesn't reduce visibility.



While many dump-bed inserts require the use of a forklift or winch, four able-bodied guys hoisted the lightweight aluminum dump-bed insert into the pickup without much fanfare. They placed pieces of carpet between the insert and pickup bed to prevent scratches.



The guys ran an industrial-strength dump-insert control wired to a 16-foot cable into the cab. The cable's long enough for the operator to walk to the end of the vehicle to watch the bed work.



Dump beds usually have a dual-action tailgate that pivots either from the top or bottom so you can get rid of the material however you like. The tailgate can be removed from the dump insert by pulling the cables attached to spring-loaded lock pins.



Switch from fall to winter by removing the tailgate and snapping on this aluminum/stainless-steel tailgate salt spreader. The TC-130 D-ICER can spread an industrial-strength 10,000-pound/hour of bulk salt and installs on the back of the TC-120 Ultra dump insert.

THE TOP THREE

Once you get the insert installed and operating, there are a few common maintenance issues to watch for. Don't worry—taking care of these minor issues is relatively easy.

• RATTLES

If you don't take care of debris stuck in pivot or resting mount areas, the noise of the dump insert rattling around in your pickup bed is guaranteed to drive you crazy. The best way to stay sane: Keep the area under the bed clean, so the insert lays evenly on its stops.

• DEBRIS

The hydraulic rams aren't impervious to wood chips, rocks, or other non-compressible items. These can get wedged underneath the ram pivot, limiting motion. Inspect this area regularly and clean it out immediately, before the ram gets damaged.

• PURGING

Every year, bleed the air out of the hydraulic system that forces the ram up, so it can provide maximum lifting force. The manufacturer's installation and operating instructions address this fairly painless process.—A.S.

SOURCES

TruckCraft Corporation
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