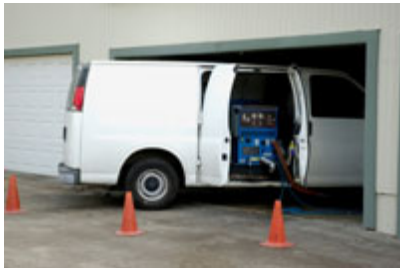


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## Truck-Mount Vs. Vehicle-Powered Carpet Machines

*By Stephen Hanig — posted 09/16/2010*



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Here's the good news: For the most part, the U.S. carpet cleaning industry has been experiencing a significant rebound from the recent economic crisis. Manufacturers, distributors, and carpet cleaning technicians report business has increased—in some cases, significantly.

Because of this, some technicians that have been holding onto older carpet cleaning tools and equipment are now looking to buy or lease new machines. And, when it comes to selecting a truck mount carpet extractor—the technician’s bread and butter—it is a major decision and an expensive one as well.

When selecting a truck mount extractor, one must choose between a slide-in machine, which is more traditional, and a vehicle-powered unit, sometimes referred to as a clutch-drive system (CDS), which is a newer technology. Both types have similar cleaning capabilities, are produced by different manufacturers, and have pros and cons. The following is designed to explain the benefits of each type of machine so users can make more informed selections.

### **Slide-In Systems**

Slide-in truck mounts, as the name implies, are designed to “slide” into a van’s cargo space and fasten to the vehicle. A slide-in unit comes with its own power supply and has its own water and recovery tanks. Some key benefits of slide-in systems are:

- They can be installed in most models of new or old vans.
- They are manufactured in a wide range of sizes and cleaning powers.
- Although it is not common to do so, they can be moved from one van to another if, for instance, a new van is purchased.

A possible disadvantage of slide-in systems, and the reason many technicians give serious consideration to a vehicle-powered unit, is maintenance requirements on some models. Slide-in truck mounts require regular maintenance, similar to any high-performance machine. This includes lubrication, tuning, winterization, etc.

### **Vehicle-Powered Systems**

A vehicle-powered truck mount/CDS uses the van’s engine for power. Via a clutch drive system, power is transferred from the vehicle’s power train to the truck mount. Essentially, the truck mount and the vehicle become a single carpet cleaning unit.

The benefits are that this system is strong, powerful, and quiet. The van’s idling engine, even if idling faster than it normally would, is still often quieter than a slide-in truck mount. Additionally, the inside of the van does not heat up as it does with a slide-in truck mount.

Also, extra room is available within the van for equipment, tanks, and hose reels. The system typically sits right behind the van’s driver and passenger seats with the drive mechanisms installed between the two seats. Other pluses include:

- Less maintenance is necessary. Distributors and service reps often report this is the main reason technicians select a vehicle-powered system over a slide-in.

- o Overall, a vehicle-powered system is easier to use and to train staff how to use.
- o No chokes or throttles are required for operation.
- o The equipment weighs less than a slide-in, and weight distribution within the van is improved.

It can be operated with the vehicle completely locked and secure. This makes a vehicle-powered system a good choice for night work or working in questionable neighborhoods.

The primary disadvantage of a vehicle-powered system is that it may require the purchase of a new van, and some units work best in specific models.

### **What About Heat?**

Most truck mount units heat water/cleaning solution. They will have either heat exchangers or a diesel or propane heater on board. The reason for this is simple. Heat improves the effectiveness of cleaning chemicals. It is one of the four key components of cleaning, which are temperature, agitation, chemical, and time.

### **What About Fuel Costs?**

Which type is the most fuel efficient? This can be hard to estimate because there are so many variables involved—from the size of the equipment to the van. Some vehicle-powered systems now have a new generation of power train/drive technology that has successfully lowered fuel consumption, and others have developed new electronic speed control systems that also help reduce fuel consumption. Manufacturers of both slide-ins and vehicle-powered truck mounts are always looking for new ways to reduce fuel consumption and make them more efficient and high performing.

#### **Related Video**

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