



Issue 3
WATSON DIESEL INC.
Municipal News

WHAT IS A RECONDITIONED TRUCK?

What is a Recon Truck? At Watson Diesel we offer reconditioning of your old truck, Bumper to Bumper as we like to say. You may ask “why recondition our old truck”?

In last month’s newsletter we discussed the evolution of emissions on the new diesel engines, and the problems associated with them. That leads us into this month’s discussion of reconditioning your existing trucks.

First, we will begin with what we mean when we say recondition or recon. At Watson Diesel we start with an evaluation of your existing truck. This is done with someone from our drive train shop and someone from our fabrication shop. They will evaluate your truck using a scoring system and help you determine if a recon is a viable alternative or if it would not be a good investment. This service is provided at your facility and is at no cost to you.

The team will first look at the make and model of your truck, engine and transmission make and model. For example, some trucks have what are considered “throw away engines”. This is usually an engine that is designed with what we call cast cylinder bores. This is a design like your gas engine that does not have removable cylinder sleeves. Without being able to replace the cylinder sleeve any wear in the bores would have to be repaired at the machine shop by boring the cylinder oversize, necessitating the removal and total disassembly of the engine. This can be an expensive operation that may make the whole project less appealing. If for example you had the popular DT-466 Navistar engine, this has removable “wet” sleeves and is a very economical rebuild. Also the truck may be just too far gone. The municipal business is one of the toughest applications for a vocational truck. Very seldom are they driven on a nice day, on dry roads. So besides the normal wear and tear we deal with a lot of rust and corrosion.

The next consideration would be do you like the truck? If its been a reliable truck that your road guys have always liked is a big consideration when trying to decide on doing a recon. If the truck has always been a problem child no matter how much the economics say to do the recon, and your drivers hate the old truck they are probably going to hate a reconditioned version.

That said we will start at the front of the truck and go to the back and see if the truck has what we call “good bones”. Even if the truck has issues with its frame cross members etc, and it is an expensive 4X4 for example, you can justify spending a lot more money on it than say a simple average spec 2 wheel drive.

So after the evaluation our team will get together and formulate a suggested path to follow for the reconditioning. We will print out a suggested list of repairs and then set down with the drivers and check writers and discuss the options. We will list the repairs that we see necessary along with a “wish list” of items and their prices that you can choose from in a menu board style. For example:

It is popular to replace the dump box as it is a wear item, along with upgrading the hydraulic system to a new electric control system, a new plow and plow hitch, repainting the cab, adding extra lights, and even installing a new driver’s seat. At this time if the engine is high hour it may be a candidate for an overhaul or maybe a tune up at the minimum. Maybe the truck has not had wheels pulled off and wheel bearings checked. It may also be time for a new clutch, or maybe just an adjustment. The bottom line is there is no limit to what we can do to your truck to return it to like new condition. A lot of used municipal trucks for example may have rusted frame rails that are beyond repair. We can remove the old rail and replace it or just replace the bad section as needed, along with cross members, wiring and hoses.

At this point you might say “why put a bunch of money into an old truck”? Good question. The answer is your old truck has a higher value than you may think. With the addition of the emissions that we discussed earlier, you may find your old truck has a much higher dispatch reliability than the new truck that you could purchase. The program of reconditioning is much the same as the “Glider Truck” program that is so popular in the over the road market today. Owner operators along with some of the largest fleets in the country are building gliders using pre emission engines as fast as they can in an effort to abate the purchase of the now troublesome emission engines. It is unfortunate that the OEMs do not offer a glider in the smaller vocational trucks that are popular in the municipal business. That is where our “Recon Program” comes in. We use your old components and build around them, changing out the wear items to return to you a truck with a new lease on life at a fraction of a new truck price! The beauty of this program is you pick from the menu board and have the truck you want at the price level you are comfortable with.

So before you decide on a new truck take a look at this option as you may be very surprised in the savings up front and the savings along the way without dealing with emissions.

Call us today and we will be glad to come out and meet with you and help you make a decision that will fit you - but remember these are all custom jobs and no two are the same.