



Covering all bases: GM adds a Class 6 medium-duty model

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With seven straight months of year-over-year market share gains through March of this year, GM's commercial truck business has been growing steadily. Recently, Chevrolet [announced it is expanding its range of trucks](#) with a new dock-height Class 6 model. The 2018 Chevrolet Low Cab Forward 6500XD, expected to be available by the end of the year, will join the manufacturer's Class 3, 4 and 5 models.

The 6500XD adds capability to the Chevrolet truck lineup. Standard equipment on the Class 6 model with a maximum GVWR of 25,950 lbs. includes a 5.2-liter four-cylinder turbodiesel that delivers 520 lb./ft. of torque, an Allison 2500 Series six-speed automatic transmission (with PTO), Dana axles and a straight-rail frame. Available in eight wheelbases, the 6500XD can accommodate bodies up to 30 ft. long.

General Motors also recently confirmed that a Duramax engine and an Allison transmission will power Chevrolet's new Class 4-5 commercial trucks. Full technical specifications for these trucks, including complete cab and frame dimensions, horsepower and torque ratings, GAWR, GVWR, payload and other details, will be released closer to the trucks' actual launch in 2018.

Chevrolet and Navistar are [developing the new Class 4-5 commercial truck jointly](#). The first Duramax diesel engines were introduced in Chevrolet and GMC trucks in 2001, and have since accumulated more than 100 billion miles. Allison transmissions have been used in Chevrolet trucks since the 1950s.

“We believe the Duramax/Allison powertrain combination will be able to tackle various jobs—from general contracting to urban delivery to bucket loaders and wreckers—for fleet and commercial customers,” said John Schwegman, U.S. director of commercial product and medium duty for GM Fleet. “We’re marshaling the best diesel and heavy-duty transmission engineers in the world and offering more choices than other manufacturers.”

Those choices now include products like the City Express small van, and the low cab forward medium-duty conventional cab trucks. In addition, there are CNG and LPG options and diesel-powered vans and pickups, all of which are compatible with B20 biodiesel.

Included in Chevrolet’s portfolio of diesel-powered vehicles are low cab forward commercial trucks with two engines—a 3.0-liter paired with a six-speed double overdrive transmission is available in 3500HD models while larger 4500HD, 4500XD, 5500HD and 6500XD models are available with a 5.2-liter engine.

Also offered is the Silverado HD with a redesigned Duramax 6.6-liter V-8 turbodiesel rated at 445 HP and 910 lb./ft. of torque, the Colorado mid-size pickup and the express full-size van in passenger and cargo variants with either a short or long wheelbase.

GM is also expanding its suite of driver connectivity and management solutions for small businesses and fleet managers. At the beginning of March, the company announced that it would add Spireon to its roster of telematics service providers, joining Telogis and GM’s own Commercial Link tool.

The turnkey, scalable solutions, GM related, can help with efficiency, idle time, labor, fleet mileage and maintenance-related downtime. They can also provide insight into driver behavior, and because they are compatible GM’s OnStar technology, no aftermarket hardware installations required.

“Our low cab forward dealers and upfitter integration group will work hand in hand with customers and their upfitters to spec the right truck for the job,” said Ed Peper, the U.S. vice president of GM Fleet and Commercial Operations. “After the sale, our dealers will be there to support customers with extended service hours and work-ready loaners.”

GM’s upfitter integration group, in particular, is available to provide technical assistance to upfitters and to serve as a liaison between customers, special vehicle manufacturers, and several of GM’s engineering, marketing and service teams. The group also maintains a website that includes technical bulletins and detailed body builder and best practice manuals.

“We’re working hard to make it possible for fleets to consolidate more of their business with us by simplifying vehicle ordering, financing, maintenance, technical support and turn-in,” Peper said. “Our goal is to offer the best work truck solutions and customer care in the business.”

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