

Truck Tool Boxes: A Complete Buying Guide



A buyer's guide to getting the best truck tool box for your needs

A truck tool box is often the first, and maybe the most essential, piece of customization for any truck that's out here doing work. Whether you're a professional who needs your truck to work as a mobile job site, or you're just looking to keep your daily driver organized, Tractor Supply Company can help you find and get the right truck tool box for your needs.

Why even get a truck tool box?

The most basic reasons to get a truck tool box are safety and organization. A truck tool box creates a functional, dedicated storage space that didn't exist before and provides extra security and storage options.

- Keeps your stuff safer – Truck toolboxes, especially steel ones, are designed with tough exteriors and heavy-duty locks to keep your things secure
- Keeps you safe from your stuff - keeping things organized in a closed container minimizes the potential for loose cargo to cause damage, and adding a storage area outside the cab means messier items like greasy tools don't have to sit up front with you
- Makes getting things easier – also makes putting them away easier. The added organization saves time and energy.
- Adds a unique look - Truck toolboxes are a good-looking accessory that make a visual statement

What kind of truck tool box should I get?

The most important thing to consider is to make sure the toolbox will fit your truck. You may need to take some measurements and check the size of the box against the size of your bed to make sure. Then you'll want to consider volume, accessibility, placement, and what changes adding a tool box will make to your truck.

Finding the right tool box is about meeting your needs. How easy is it to get to? Does it take space away from the truck bed? Is it big enough? These are questions you want to ask. Look for the right mix of durability and security, style, and affordability.

Durability and Security

How to select the right material for your truck tool box

Truck tool boxes at Tractor Supply Company come in aluminum, steel, stainless steel, and plastic/composite varieties. Each material is unique and comes with unique properties.

- **Aluminum:** Aluminum is the most popular material for truck tool boxes. Aluminum is lightweight but sturdy, naturally corrosion resistant, and has a sleek look, especially when diamond stamped. The biggest benefit of aluminum is its low cost and corrosion resistance.
- **Steel:** Steel truck tool boxes provide additional security and are usually the heaviest and strongest truck tool boxes. Steel is not naturally resistant to rust, so steel boxes will have a powder coating to maintain their integrity. You'll want to make sure this coating stays intact to preserve the tool box.
- **Stainless Steel:** A few truck tool boxes are made from stainless steel, which provides the security and toughness of steel with corrosion resistance akin to aluminum. Stainless steel boxes often have an ultra-polished, chrome look, but they also tend to be the most expensive truck tool boxes.
- **Plastic/Composite:** Plastic truck tool boxes are extremely durable and outperform even aluminum for corrosion and weather resistance. They sometimes can succumb to slight solar discoloration but are otherwise extremely durable and tend to be lightweight and affordable.

Style and fit

A guide to the different kinds of truck tool boxes

Tractor Supply Company carries crossover, side mount, top mount, chest, wheel well, trailer tongue, underbed, and drawer style truck tool boxes. When selecting a crossover box, make sure to get the right width and depth for your vehicle. Most install simply with hand tools.

Crossover (aka traditional or saddle)style truck tool box

Crossover truck tool boxes are extremely popular due to their versatility and ease of installation and ease of access. These boxes cross over the top of the bed and rest on the rails. Because of their popularity, these boxes have a wide variety of options.

Depth - A standard crossover box will not reach the bed, leaving some space for cargo to still utilize the entire length. A "deep" crossover box has more volume but will take away more bed length than a standard.

Types of tops – Standard tops are about six inches high, making the box easier to access from outside the bed, but they can block some visibility out of the back window. Low-profile tops are shorter, usually about three inches. Some crossover boxes have rails welded on for storing cargo on top of the box.

Types of bottoms – some boxes, particularly "deep" ones, may have a notched or angled bottom to ensure they stay out of the way of wheel wells or other contours in the truck bed.

Other variables like lid configuration and latch style and configuration will affect how you access the inside of the box, and its security.

Side Mount (aka lo-side)

Side mount boxes rest on the side of the bed rail, with most of the box being inside the bed. These boxes are easy to access from outside the bed, and can work in conjunction with another side box, and even a crossover or chest box (if space allows) A downside of these is they take up space inside the bed.

Top Mount (aka topsider or hi-side)

Top mount boxes mount like cabinets on the side of the bed rails, usually one or two high. They take up no bed space but do effectively raise the height of the rails. They are easy to access from outside the truck bed, but not accessible from inside the truck bed.

Chest Box (aka utility)

Chest boxes are designed to have the most versatile fit. They almost always fit inside the bed and sit lower than the rails. This allows them to be used with a tonneau cover. You will see the largest variety of shapes, sizes and materials in the chest boxes. They can be mounted to the truck or designed to be pulled in and out.

Wheel Well

This is a specific type of truck tool box designed to fit next to, or in the space near the wheel well. It can take up otherwise unused space and make that space more organized.

Underbody (aka underbed)

These truck tool boxes are almost exclusively for service or flat-bed trucks. They mount under the bed and provide cabinet style access, usually one or two deep. They can carry a swing-down style or barn style door.

Drawer style (aka bed organizers)

Drawer style truck tool boxes sit flat on the truck bed, effectively raising the bed height, but they provide an entire, large drawer to utilize. This is a highly organized, high-volume option that limits the amount of bed space lost without mounting to the exterior of the truck. The drawer-style tool box is accessible from the back of the bed with the tailgate lowered.

How do I install a truck tool box?

Most truck tool boxes install simply with hand tools. Some may require drilling. Follow the instructions on your product to ensure it is installed correctly.