

TRUCK HACKS

– Everything in its Place –

The ideal layout inside a contractor vehicle tailors the space for efficiency while giving technicians a sense of déjà vu.

BY ROBERT BEVERLY
ACHR NEWS STAFF

For contractors who sort out what will work best for their needs and equipment, the biggest payoff behind a good vehicle layout is not so much creating it as replicating it.

“With 30-plus service trucks on the road, we found that organizing and standardizing truck stock was a must,” said Josh Matney, service manager for Fayette Heating & Air in Lexington, Kentucky.

FOR FILTERS' SAKE

This air filter made it into the customer's system. Some are not so lucky. DiFilippo's Service in Paoli, Pennsylvania, uses sheet metal to build its own holders for air filters so they won't get banged up on the truck, said president Laura A. DiFilippo.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HOMESPOT HQ/Flickr
[CC BY 2.0]



SHELVED AND STRAPPED

DiFilippo's install trucks use custom shelving for the bins that techs will need. Strap down usual suspects, like anything with wheels, to ensure that items won't roll (or fly) around the truck in transit.

PHOTO COURTESY OF
DIFILIPPO'S SERVICE



STORAGE IS LOOKING UP

In DiFilippo's service trucks, the shelving is customized in whatever ways will boost efficiency – marked inventory boxes, refrigerant racks, “anything that helps!” Securing and suspending certain items from the ceiling while leaving adequate headroom is another smart use of space.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DIFILIPPO'S SERVICE



TRASH IS NO EXCEPTION

Organization doesn't stop with tools and equipment. Stock a slim-line trash can and bags in the truck. All three contractors mentioned cleanliness in the truck as a component – and a benefit – of standardization.

NOT JUST FOR THE GARAGE ANYMORE

Billy Stutz, senior marketing manager for commercial and residential trade channels at Ferguson Enterprises, explores a number of truck tips at www.ferguson.com/content/trade-talk/business-tips/how-to-organize-your-work-van. One tip: “Install a pegboard and hooks to hang medium-sized items such as hand tools and power tools.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF MTNEER_MAN/Flickr
[CC BY-ND 2.0]



FURTHER IN THE BIN

As Matney documented with photos, labeled bins aren't the end of the opportunity. Dividers inside the bin can store items that are similar in function or size while keeping the rummaging to a minimum.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FAYETTE HEATING & AIR



LEAVE A LITTLE ROOM

One key presence on every truck is, of course, the tech or techs. Whatever storage strategy a contractor deploys, Matney recommends building in some room for techs' personal or trade-specific tools.

A HANDY ATTRACTION

Magnetic stripping can provide a quick-access home for frequently used metal tools. Stutz recommends this option for van door interiors as a good (and convenient) home for things like tape measurers and hammers.



INVENTORY UPSIDE

While these tactics save time in the field, they can also save time back at the office or warehouse. Deciding on an approach and integrating it across the fleet “expedites replenishment and quarterly inventories,” in Matney's experience. Maybe that inspires a more efficient idea or two elsewhere in the operation, too.

Either way, a good interior layout for each vehicle can save time before the job as well as during. Both DiFilippo and Matney extolled the virtues of any tech being able to hop into any vehicle, immediately know where everything is located, and do the next job without missing a beat. [N](#)