

2004 FORD F-150 SUPERCREW



The new F-150 rests on a frame that is nine times more resistant to torsion than before. It has a new V8 engine and a new transmission, and it boasts the roomiest cab in its 55-year history. It is available in a choice of Regular, SuperCab or SuperCrew cab models and in a number of different versions.

Cab and cargo

With the optional running boards, access to the 4WD versions is easy; without them, it's a high step up to the roomy cab, even for tall people. The flat, firm seats provide average comfort and little side support. The driving position is very good, thanks among other things to the adjustable pedals that are standard in the Lariat version and optional in the others. The pedals adjust can be adjusted when the vehicle is moving, which should not be allowed for obvious safety reasons.



With its straight backrest and flat cushion, the uncomfortable rear bench is good in a pinch but not for long distances. However, there is ample headroom and legroom.

The SuperCrew model is available only with a 5.5 ft. box, but a box extender expands its cargo capacity. The locking tailgate has a torsion bar that makes it easy to open and close. The sides of the box are higher than in the preceding generation, which is good for cargo capacity but bad for the view to the rear when backing up.

Convenience and safety

The cab is well finished, with good soundproofing that muffles all but some occasional wind noise. An abundance of storage compartments compensates for the small glove box.

Few vehicles can boast as full a complement of instruments as the SuperCrew. Instruments and controls are well laid out, though the

windshield wiper lever is higher than in most vehicles and seems unusual at first. The MIST control provides a few swipes of the wipers but only if you apply the right degree of pressure to the end of the lever. The heating system is efficient, and the optional Audiophile sound system is excellent.

Safety equipment includes dual front air bags and high-locking head restraints. There are only two head restraints in the back. The headlights are bright, and visibility is very good on all sides, though the high box sides can be a problem when backing up.

Engine and transmission

The new 5.4-litre V8 engine pumps out 300 hp and 365 lb-ft of torque. It has three valves per cylinder, a variable distribution system, and 80 per cent of torque on tap at 1000 rpm. Acceleration both from a standing stop and passing is easy, smooth and progressive. As might be expected, this is a thirsty engine, but it meets Low Emission Vehicle standards. Appropriately equipped, the F-150 has a 4,309-kg tow rating.

The new, four-speed automatic transmission is very smooth but it can downshift abruptly when slowing down. The gearshift lever feels—and sounds when shifting—a bit cheap. The electronic transfer case is efficient.

On the road

Suspension firmness is well controlled and even a bit compliant on some rough patches. The firmness is not incompatible with comfort; the ride improves with a bit of weight in the box. Unloaded, the F-150 can rock and bounce at times. For a pickup, road holding is surprisingly good.

The power steering is well weighted, relatively stable and precise, and quick. It provides a bit of road feel. Braking is powerful and fade resistant.

At the CAA-Quebec inspection centre, the F-150 seemed sturdy and well built. However, the motor oil dipstick is almost impossible to reach, the gas tank filler pipe (and the rear fenders) are exposed to damage, and rustproofing is perfunctory.

Conclusion

Ford had its work cut out to maintain the F-series' title as North America's best-selling vehicle. The roomy new F-150 feels sturdy and fully capable of handling practically any job that comes its way, thanks to the many available versions. However, a good road test is necessary to ensure that seat comfort is acceptable.

STRONG POINTS

Roominess
Smooth ride
Road holding
Smooth transmission
Powerful engine (5.4L)
Soundproofing

WEAK POINTS

No real MIST function
Small glove box
Average front-seat comfort
Uncomfortable rear bench
Poor fuel economy
Protection of certain parts

2004 Ford F-150 SuperCrew

Engine: 16-valve, 4.6L V8; 24-valve, 5.4L V8

Torque: 293 lb-ft @ 3500 rpm; 365 lb-ft @ 3750 rpm

Suspension: independent front/rigid rear

Length: 568.9 cm

Height: 186.1 cm (4WD: 189.7 cm)

Weight: 2,363 kg

Towing capacity: 4,309 kg

Horsepower: 231 hp à 4750 rpm; 300 hp @ 5000 rpm

Transmission: 4-speed automatic

Brakes: 4-wheel disc

Width: 200.4 cm

Wheelbase: 351.7 cm

Tires: P255/65R17; P275/60R18; P255/70R17; P275/65R18

Air bags: standard front

Fuel consumption:

- Transport Canada rating: city: 16.5 L/100 km (17 mpg); highway: 11.8 L/100 km (24 mpg)
- Test result: 20 L/100 (14 mpg)

Fuel tank capacity: 113 litres

Acceleration: 0-100 km/h: 9.9 seconds 60-100 km/h: 6.8 seconds

Competition: Chevrolet Avalanche and Silverado, Dodge Ram, GMC Sierra, Nissan Titan, Toyota Tundra

Warranty:

- Full basic coverage: 3 years/60,000 km
- Powertrain: 3 years/60,000 km
- Surface corrosion: 3 years/60,000
- Perforation damage: 5 years/unlimited mileage
- Emissions control system: 3 years/60,000 km (full coverage); 8 years/130,000 km (catalytic converter, electronic control module and onboard diagnostic device)

Factory replacement parts:

Rear bumper: \$631

Brake pads: \$113

Front fender: \$278

Front brake disk: \$171

Muffler: \$535

Average insurance premium (Quebec City, replacement cost endorsement, claim-free insurance record, female driver or male driver 30 to 40 years old): \$947 to \$1,553

Price according to trim line:

XLT 2WD: \$35,140

XLT 4WD: \$39,205

Lariat 2WD: \$41,295

Lariat 4WD: \$45,360

Main options:

Sun roof: \$1,020

Towing package: \$475

Reverse sensing system: \$325

Running boards: \$465

Audiophile sound system: \$330

Price as tested: \$49,770**Freight and preparation:** \$1,045**Dealers:** Quebec: 127; Canada: 600

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