

## 2010 FORD TRANSIT CONNECT



Launched in 2003 in Europe, where it was awarded the title International Van of the Year, the Transit Connect makes its *début* this year in North America. A larger vehicle than the Honda Element, it is similar in size to the Dodge Nitro, though taller. The Transit is available as a cargo van or a passenger van with a rear bench seat. Both models use a 2.0-litre 4-cylinder engine hooked to a 4-speed automatic transmission to power their front wheels.

### **Interior and cargo area**

The front seats are easy to access and comfortable, with lumbar adjustment on the driver side. With seat-height adjustment and a tilt-and-telescoping steering wheel, the driver can easily obtain a good driving position. Legroom is good, and headroom is very generous.

The passenger version offers a rather firm rear bench that provides adequate comfort for two adults. A tunnel takes up all the foot room in the middle. The folding seatback is split 60/40 and each seat section can be flipped forward after removing the head restraints.

Commercial cargo capacity is impressive, with 127.5 cm available height. The cargo area measures 190 cm behind the front seats and 121.5 cm between the wheel wells. The opening of the sliding side doors is 80 cm, and the rear doors open 180 degrees.

### **Convenience and safety features**

Interior finish is good for a commercial van. Soundproofing is deficient, but normal for the type of vehicle. Storage is adequate thanks to a shelf that extends across the entire width of the vehicle above the windshield.

Gauges and controls are well laid out. At night, the glove compartment, passenger power window control and wheel-mounted controls are not illuminated. The heating system provides good heat, but the fan is a bit weak and in the Heat/Defrost setting, almost no heat reaches the driver's feet.

*Photo: Ford*

The wipers look flimsy, especially the rear ones. A few seconds after the washers are used, the front wipers make an additional sweep that smears the windshield more often than not. Depending on the model, the sliding and/or rear doors can be obtained with windows.

Safety equipment includes dual front and dual side airbags, antilock brakes and emergency braking assistance. Stability control is standard on the passenger version and optional on the others. Visibility is good towards the front and through the front-door windows but the blind zones on each side are very large, especially in models without side-door windows. The centre frames of the rear doors are large enough to hide a following vehicle from view. Ford should equip the vehicle with larger mirrors to compensate. Backing up is not always easy. A reverse sensing system is available as an option, but it should be standard. The headlights are barely adequate in terms of power and intensity.

In U.S. government frontal crash tests, the Transit Connect passenger van obtained five stars out of five for driver protection, and four stars for front-passenger protection. It received five stars for all-occupant protection in a side crash, and three stars for rollover resistance.

### **Engine and transmission**

The 2.0-litre 4-cylinder engine develops 136 horsepower and 128 pound-feet of torque. In routine driving with a moderate load, it moves the Transit along reasonably well, with decent acceleration and pickup. Needless to say, the engine begins to strain as the load approaches maximum (726 kg), especially uphill. It should be noted that Ford forbids towing a trailer with the Transit.

The four-speed automatic transmission functions very smoothly at all times. Gearshifts are imperceptible. The transmission lets you drive off in second gear. And at long last in a product from Ford, you can shift from drive to neutral without having to unlock the shifter.

### **On the road**

The Transit is built on an exclusive commercial platform to which the engineers added an independent suspension in front and a torsion beam suspension in the rear. In general, the setup provides a comfortable ride. Evidently, when the Transit is not loaded, the torsion beam causes a firm bounce on some types of bumps, but no more. With a load, things calm down quite markedly. Handling is good for this type of vehicle.

The well-tuned power steering is stable, precise and quite fast, and it transmits a bit of road feel. The turning radius is tight, which is much appreciated in this type of vehicle. The brakes are powerful, and they resist well to fade after a series of highway-speed emergency stops.

## Inspection

An inspection at a CAA-Quebec technical inspection centre showed that the Transit's platform is sturdy and relatively well protected against corrosion. To open the hood, you have to insert the sturdy ignition key in a lock behind the Ford badge in the centre of the grille. How long the system will stand up to our winter weather is questionable. In the engine compartment, the windshield washer reservoir is placed over the left front tire, not the best location for a roadside fill-up. The rather small connecting rods of the steering system may not last very long. Debris can get through the large openings under the front bumper and damage the air-conditioner condenser. The overhead camshafts of this engine are chain driven.

## Conclusion

The Transit's dimensions, room, comfort, handling and road comportment will appeal to a wide range of customers. The passenger version makes room for people as well as cargo. However, larger mirrors and the option to equip all doors with windows are needed to improve visibility.

**PROS:** comfortable front seats, smooth transmission, handling, road comportment, solid platform, versatility

**CONS:** visibility, non-lighted controls and glove box, weak fan, air distribution needs work, one wiper sweep too many, openings under front bumper

## 2010 FORD TRANSIT CONNECT

**Engine:** 16-valve, 2.0-litre 4-cylinder

**Horsepower:** 136 hp at 6,300 rpm

**Torque:** 128 lb-ft at 4,750 rpm

**Transmission:** 4-speed automatic

**Suspension:** fully independent

**Brakes:** disc/drum

**Wheelbase:** 291.1 cm

**Length:** 459 cm

**Width:** 211.3 cm (with mirrors)

**Height:** 201.4 cm

**Weight:** 1,524 to 1,544 kg

**Tires:** P205/65R15

**Maximum towing capacity:** forbidden

**Airbags:** dual front, plus two side

### Fuel consumption:

Natural Resources Canada rating:

City: 9.5 L/100 km (30 mpg)

Test result: 10 L/100 km (28 mpg)

Highway: 7.9 L/100 km (35.5 mpg)

Test temperature: 3°C to 20°C

**CO<sub>2</sub> emissions:** 4,048 kg/20,000 km

**Fuel tank capacity:** 58.3 litres

**Fuel requirement:** regular grade gasoline

**Acceleration:**

0–100 km/h: 12.6 seconds

60–100 km/h: 9.8 seconds

**Competition:** Chevrolet HHR, Chrysler PT Cruiser

**Warranty:**

- Full basic coverage: 3 years/60,000 km
- Powertrain: 5 years/100,000 km
- Surface corrosion: 3 years/60,000 km
- Perforation damage: 5 years/unlimited km
- Emissions control system: 3 years/60,000 km (full coverage); 8 years/130,000 km (catalytic converter, electronic control module, onboard diagnostic system).

**Factory replacement parts:**

- Rear bumper: \$342
- Front brake disc: \$122
- Brake pads: \$163
- Muffler: \$248
- Front fender: \$236

**Price according to trim level:**

- Cargo XLT: \$26,799
- Wagon XLT: \$28,299

**Main options:**

- Rear door glass: \$450
- Reverse park aid: \$250 (Cargo XLT)
- Advance Trac: \$550 (Cargo XLT)

**Price as tested:** \$28,179

**Freight and preparation:** \$1,400

**Dealers:** Quebec: 112      Canada: 443

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