

Weight Distribution (1)
Stan Brown
Mailto:stanb@trucktalk.net

One of the more important, but maybe one of the least considered, factors, when buying truck equipment, is weight distribution.

The significance is magnified in straight trucks versus combination units. Typically, a tractor and semi-trailer setup will have at least one, and more often two, fulcrum points. Namely, a sliding 5th wheel and/or an adjustable suspension on the trailer. These adjustments allow the operator to shift the weight burden between axles.

After loading the driver may find that he's 1,500lbs over the legal limit on the trailer tandem. By sliding the suspension forward or backwards it's possible to change the weight distribution and bring the unit into compliance.

The straight truck is a horse of a different color.

Disregarding, for the time being, the effects of a "tag" or a "pusher" axle, the only way to change the weight distribution is to move the load. Labor intensive, time consuming. Much better to have originally spec'd the chassis and body combination to conform to the load and weight regulations in the prevailing jurisdiction.

In part two we'll explore how to make sure that our body and chassis work together.