



### HALF TON MYTH

So what's in a name? Not much when it comes to half-ton trucks.

A ton is 2000 pounds (907.19 kg) so does it follow that a half-ton truck weights 1000 pounds. Actually, the name doesn't refer to the weight of the truck but the payload weight of a truck which is the weight with cargo and passengers. But if you take a look at the stats on modern half-ton pickups, you'll notice that their payload capacities exceed 1000 pounds (453.5 kg). The name was derived from early half-ton pickups with maximum payloads of 1000 pounds (453.5 kg) since the 1960's. New and improved half-ton pickups have been able to safely carry more, surpassing their namesakes.

But old habits die hard, and the name half-ton has stuck around to this day. The half-ton truck has been replaced with 1500 series, the three-quarter ton with 2500 series and the one-ton with 3500 series (or Ford F150, F250 and F350). Maximum manufacturer recommended payload capacity for individual truck's specification can be found on the driver's door post area and in the owner's manual. The weight of the truck without cargo or passengers is called the curb weight. Newer half-ton pickups have curb weights between 4,000 pounds (1800 kg) and 5,000 pounds (2250 kg).

But, don't skip over half-tons because you think you need more capacity because this name contradicts their real hauling power. It turns out that not only do half-ton pickups weigh and carry more than they use to, they can also tow more than they use to.

Although "payload capacity" usually refers to how much weight a truck can carry in both passengers and cargo in the cab and bed, "towing capacity" refers to how much the truck can safely tow. This figure is called the Gross Combined Weight Rating or GCWR. The gross combination weight rating is calculated by adding the vehicle's listed curb weight, allowable payload, driver and passenger weight and trailer weight plus cargo. For example, a 2003 Chevrolet 1500, 5.3L has a curb weight of 2351 kg and RGW of 3000 kg, the GCWR 6356 kg. What this means is this vehicle, can carry 649 kg (1428 pounds) passenger & cargo in bed, and can haul a trailer weight with cargo up to 3356 kg (7385 pounds).

Manufacturers often embellish the maximum towing capacity of a truck in advertisements. For instance they often calculate this number by supposing that nothing is in the truck except for a 150 pound driver. In realistic situations the driver may be heavier, other passengers are in the cab and extra cargo is in the bed. This will make the towing capacity lower.

Keep in mind that hauling power depends on variables like the engine, the transmission, the size of the brakes and rear axle rating. Although half-ton trucks are the most popular selling trucks they are known as light duty vehicles and are meant for lugging furniture and other relatively small loads. If you have more hefty loads, try heavy duty vehicles, including three quarter ton and one ton trucks which generally have bigger frames, firmer suspensions, larger cooling systems and more powerful engines. We have seen more diesel powered one-ton trucks on the roads than ever before. These trucks can handle large fifth wheel trailers that weigh up to 22,000 pounds (10,000 kg).

The newer generation pickups not only have increased towing capacity, they have increased passenger capacity by changing standard size cabs to cab and a half (extended cab) with rear seating to larger crew cabs with full size back seats creating a very versatile vehicle.

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