



FIRST DRIVE NEW 3LITRE CANTER AUTOMATIC

We got our first look at the new Canter 4x4 FG 3 litre Automatic at the release in Indianapolis NETA show earlier this year.

Like many other manufactures using the Canter as their cab chassis of choice, I was very keen to try out the new 3 litre engine and DUONIC 6-speed gear box used in both the 4x4 and 4x2 as soon as possible. I could not pass up the opportunity to drive the 4x2 when our Portland FUSO dealer offered a quick cab chassis test drive.

I just have to keep remembering which side the pedals are on....

There is much of the new Canter that will be familiar to current owners. Easy cab access and handles where you would expect to find them. New dash lay out, easy to use switches and knobs and of course the great vision from the cab over design. A nice new feature is a suspension driver's seat, no leap forward in the passenger seat though. All the normal creature comforts are there as one has come to expect.

It was the first time my host had driven the unit, but we found reverse and first gear without much trouble. A good start.

The drive was around the industrial area, good roads, rough roads typical of industrial areas almost anywhere, and a short hi-way run.

Taking off from a slight rise we let the auto gear decide what gear was best, fourth was the decision. Zero to 35MPH (roughly 60KLM) was very quick and absolutely painless. Up 60MPH (100KLM) same deal.

On the road, one notices it is quiet, very quiet. The other is the real smooth ride, out of a standard Canter cab chassis.... Surprised me. So much so I had to pull over and check if there were leaf springs under there or an independent front end. The through your spine jab over speed bumps typical of the cab over was just not there.

Move the gear "stick" to the manual position and run up and down the gears, smooth and easy once one figures out the shift. There is no noticeable lag between gears, in manual or auto mode. Automatic gear boxes/diesel technology has come a long way.

Key things I needed to know; is the "small" 3litre motor and Auto gear box going to do the job for our customers. I think yes.

The new Canter 4x2 Auto is ideal for our new EarthCruiser OUTBACK 4x2 range of campers getting released at the Brisbane Caravan and Camping show in Queensland, Australia.

For our world travelers who need an engine that can use low sulfur diesel, the last of the 4.9 litre engines are pure gold and will be missed.

I am looking forward to driving the new 4x4 which is fitted with the identical engine and DUONIC 6-speed when they arrive. The release date for the 4X4 is still sometime away (September here in the US and to be confirmed in Australia).

<http://www.mitfuso.com/index.html/Models/FE125>

Many thanks to Jim at FUSO Portland Or USA.