



Calex ISCS Finds Kenworth T680 Reliability Key To Success

PITTSTON, Pa. – When it comes to the delivery of goods with short shelf life, there is no room for mechanical hiccups. When a customer orders items such as produce, the expectation is for consistent on-time deliveries, otherwise they may lose out on the amount of time they have to sell their products.

For Calex ISCS, a transportation company that specializes in transporting temperature-controlled goods and produce to and from the West Coast, as well as other time-sensitive goods, operating reliable equipment is a high priority. In an effort to increase the uptime of its company-owned trucks, Calex ISCS began adding Kenworth T680s five years ago.



“Reliability is our No. 1 priority when it comes to the trucks in our fleet,” said Tommy Grimes, Calex ISCS chief operating officer. “We had experienced a lot of issues with the previous trucks in our fleet, and grew tired of the downtime. When trucks are sidelined due to mechanical issues, our drivers miss out on paid drive time, and we can’t deliver the service our customers expect. It was time to make a change.”

When Calex ISCS made the decision to transition to a new truck make, the company spent a lot of time researching, evaluating customer feedback, and visiting with dealers so that they would feel confident in the trucks they purchased. The company also tested three truck makes to see which truck came out on top.



Tommy Grimes
Calex ISCS Chief Operating Officer

“We were very thorough when deciding which truck to build our fleet around,” said Grimes. “We wanted to add a truck that would prove to be reliable, increase our fuel economy, and be widely accepted by our drivers. The Kenworth T680 came out on top.”

Since 2014, Calex ISCS has added 133 Kenworth T680s to its fleet. By the end of 2019, with the addition of three Kenworth T680s that are currently on order, the company’s fleet will consist of all Kenworth T680s. Calex ISCS purchases all of its Kenworth T680s from Kenworth of Pennsylvania – Dunmore.

The Calex ISCS Kenworth T680s – primarily with 76-inch sleepers, along with a few day cabs – feature the PACCAR MX-13 engine rated at 450 hp. In 2019, the company began spec’ing its Kenworth T680s with the complete PACCAR Powertrain by adding the PACCAR 12-speed automated transmission to join the PACCAR MX-13 and PACCAR 40K tandem rear axles in its specifications.



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Doug Barbacci, Calex ISCS Principal

According to Doug Barbacci, Calex ISCS principal, the Kenworth T680s equipped with PACCAR transmissions are a noticeable upgrade from the other transmissions in the fleet.

“The PACCAR transmission stands above the rest, and seems to have an easier time climbing mountain ranges. Our drivers enjoy how smoothly it shifts gears,” said Barbacci. “We’ve been very pleased with its performance and we plan to continue to spec our future Kenworth T680s with that transmission.” Calex ISCS currently operates 33 T680s with the PACCAR Powertrain.

The Kenworth T680s assigned to the company’s reefer division rack up the most miles. With team drivers reaching approximately 230,000 miles a year and single drivers eclipsing 130,000 miles, their trucks are constantly making runs coast-to-coast. Since making its first purchase of Kenworth T680s, the performance has held true to the company’s expectations.



“The Kenworth T680 has proved to be such a reliable truck for us,” said Grimes. “We boast a 99 percent on time delivery record and I can attribute much of that success to the reliability of our trucks. If we are unable to make consistent on-time deliveries, our customers will find someone else who will. We take pride in our service, which is why we operate high quality equipment we can depend on.”

While reliability will always be the No. 1 deciding factor in the trucks Calex ISCS operates, the company felt it was important to provide its drivers with trucks that they would be comfortable in and enjoy driving.

“We absolutely turned to our drivers for feedback when we ultimately decided to go with the T680,” said Barbacci. “The T680’s cab layout is very roomy and driver friendly. Our drivers take pride in the equipment they operate. In the T680, we know we have a truck that will perform well, coupled with the comfort and driving experience that our drivers look for.”

Calex ISCS plans to trade in its Kenworth T680s every five years to keep equipment new, which Barbacci expects will help keep maintenance costs low and assist with driver retention.

“Our trucks accumulate a lot of miles, and we want to be sure we’re always running the best conditioned equipment. This trade-in cycle will help us achieve that objective,” said Barbacci. “And, I think our drivers will appreciate it, too. The Kenworth T680 helps us achieve our company goals, and the support we receive from our Kenworth of Pennsylvania – Dunmore has been terrific. They understand our needs and have added to the Kenworth experience we were hoping to receive when we made the commitment to become a Kenworth fleet.”

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