

Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2007 Ford Expedition Limited 5.4L 4X4 The Family Friendly Adventurer

BY KATHLEEN CARR

When it comes time to fill up the tank, it's not easy to justify a full-size sport utility. The Expedition is meant for utility. It carries people, hauls gear, tows boats, and pulls campers. The Expedition offers towing capacities in the 9000-pound range. When it's equipped with four-wheel drive, the Expedition will also get you there whether the road is dry, wet, snowy, or even when there's hardly any road at all.

The Expedition has been thoroughly revised for 2007 to make it a platform for family-friendly adventures. Every aspect of its utility has been improved: towing capacity, passenger comfort and even driving enjoyment.

The 2007 Ford Expedition comes in two different sizes, the standard model with a 119-inch wheelbase, and the new Expedition EL with its 131-inch wheelbase. Every Expedition is powered by a single-overhead-cam 5.4-liter V-8 that is rated at 300 horsepower and 365 pound-feet of torque. A new, six-speed



Specifications: 5.4-Liter 300-hp @ 365 lb-ft. torque, V-8 Engine; 6-Speed Automatic O/D Transmission; Electronically engaged 4-wheel drive; 14-City 20-Highway MPG; \$47,610. MSRP

automatic transmission is standard equipment. Every Expedition model is available with either rear-wheel drive (2WD) or electronically engaged four-wheel drive (4WD). A Class III trailer hitch is standard.

Safety equipment includes front-seat frontal and side-impact air bags, three-row head-protection curtain air bags, anti-lock braking (ABS), and electronic stability control with anti-rollover technology.

The Limited and Limited 4WD are meant to deliver car-like, highway-friendly sophistication in a sport-utility package. The style

statement is far grander and the list of convenience features includes elaborate luxury items. Leather upholstery is standard, as are front captain's chairs (driver's seat is 10-way adjustable) with a heating/cooling feature. The power-folding rear bench seat is standard. Exterior upgrades include 255/70R18 tires with chrome-finish wheels, power-adjustable and folding mirrors.

The Ford Expedition is a truck and, unlike so many other full-size sport-utilities, it doesn't pretend to be anything else. This is a good identity to have, because Ford

trucks continue to have an outstanding reputation for utility, reliability and durability.

In the past, the Expedition hasn't been able to establish much of a visual identity. This new third-generation Expedition features a three-bar grille, large jewel-like headlights, and a domed hood that combine to deliver a look that's both distinctive and respectable. Moreover, there are five different wheel designs, including new 20-inchers with a chrome finish.

The 2007 Expedition has a brand-new interior look; a richer blend of

finishes textures and colors. In fact, the overall effect of the fully optioned 2007 Expedition Limited is the best representation of modern American-style luxury within Ford's overall vehicle lineup. Wood, chrome and leather make the Expedition an inviting place to spend a day on the road.

The Expedition's available third-row seat is also impressively unique. Packaging advantages afforded by the Expedition's independent rear suspension enable this rear seat to deliver a far more comfortable seating for adults. Moreover, the three-row canopy airbags ensure the third-row passengers have the same head protection in a collision as passengers in the forward seat rows.

The Expedition's liftgate with its flip-up glass hatch also makes access to the cargo area very easy. The best thing about the Expedition's bench-type seats in the second and third rows is the way in which they can be folded flat onto the cargo floor, affording a long cargo area that can be easily loaded.

The 2007 Ford Expedition tracks down the highway with excellent straight-line stability, negotiates forest roads with surprising agility, and absorbs impacts from bumps or broken pavement without straying from its path. The Expedition maintains a surprising calm considering its truck heritage. Most of the

magic comes from car-like engineering. The two-speed 4WD system is engaged with a simple rotary knob mounted on the dashboard, and it automatically reduces throttle sensitivity in low range for better traction in slippery circumstances.

The overhead-cam 5.4-liter V8 delivers 300 hp, but it's really tuned to deliver 365 pound-feet of torque for towing, a product of variable valve timing and cylinder heads with three valves per cylinder. In the past, this engine has seemed sluggish compared to its competition, despite its excellent power rating, but the addition of a new, six-speed automatic transmission for 2007 has transformed its personality. This engine performance also has a notable impact on towing, making it seem like a pleasure instead of a chore.

The 2007 Ford Expedition stands apart because it not only offers the best overall utility package but also delivers superior performance in virtually every way. As fuel prices help shift priorities to smaller, more efficient vehicles, it's important to remember that full-size sport-utilities will become more useful than ever simply because no other vehicle can do so much with so many people. Ford is right on target with its family adventure concept, and the Ford Expedition is the best vehicle for family vacation travel on the American road.

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