

## Success Story: Raven Transport

Market Served  
Linehaul



## Eaton® Solo® Clutches simplify, enhance Fleet's preventative maintenance program

### Location Details:

Jacksonville, Florida

### Segment Details:

Long distance over-the-road truck operations.

### Problem:

Linehaul trucks were on the road past scheduled preventative maintenance intervals.

### Solution:

Eaton® self-adjusting Solo Advantage™ clutch.

### Results:

Eliminating a clutch adjustment is a big plus...especially when you don't see that vehicle every PM. Trade-in trucks averaged between 500,000 and 550,000 service miles ...and not a single truck needed a clutch replaced based upon wear.

### Contact Information:

Eaton Corporation  
Vehicle Group  
P.O. Box 4013  
Kalamazoo, MI 49003  
1-800-826-HELP (4357)  
www.roadranger.com

*"Gone are the days when you had to manually adjust a clutch that also needed to be lubricated often. When the Solo came out it was just another natural fit for our sleeper, linehaul operation."*

*Ed Larkins, maintenance director,  
Raven Transport*

### Background

Raven Transport is a truckload carrier that opened its doors for business in 1985. In addition to its Jacksonville, FL, headquarters, the company has two additional terminals in Albany, GA, and Greensboro, NC. While Raven does have operating authority in all 48 continental states, the vast majority of freight movement is concentrated in the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest and Northeast.

Among the company's more than 400 trucks there are roughly 300 Volvo and 28 Peterbilt sleeper tractors that are typically on the road for two to three weeks before drivers have an opportunity to return home. That often means that drivers and tractors may not return to one of Raven's three terminals for preventative maintenance (PM) for several months, says Ed Larkins, maintenance director.

When that happens, important 25,000-mile PM intervals may need to be done on the road.

"But we always tell our drivers that we want to see them at least every other scheduled service," adds Larkins. "Sometimes returning home means just that – home – and we don't have a terminal next to everyone's home."

### Challenge

But when the trucks are in one of the three terminals belonging to Raven, servicing is thorough, says Larkins. "Once we do get our hands on a truck, whether it's 25,000 miles or 50,000 miles, we want to be absolutely certain that it can go out again trouble free," adds the 45-year trucking industry professional. "We typically spend about two to three hours with every truck.

"The process includes a very detailed inspection of the entire truck and we download information from the truck computers to ensure there are no issues. We take these steps because it may run another 50,000 miles before we see it again."

To further ensure the Raven PM program is running smoothly, specifying low-maintenance components with all new truck orders is another top priority for Raven Transport and Larkins.

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## Solution

Among his favorites in that category are Eaton® Solo® heavy-duty clutches.

Capable of eliminating as many as 13 manual adjustments for every truck in the Raven fleet, Eaton Solo clutches employ a technology that keeps the clutch in constant adjustment by always maintaining the correct bearing release position. A stainless steel cam spring delivers increased durability and long life, while a full-round contamination baffle protects against debris.

Eaton recently launched a new Advantage Series™ Solo clutch with numerous product improvements and enhancements that now allow for new 50,000-mile service intervals replacing current 25,000-mile intervals.

For now at least, Raven is still using the original Eaton Solo clutch – and Larkins' reviews are highly positive.

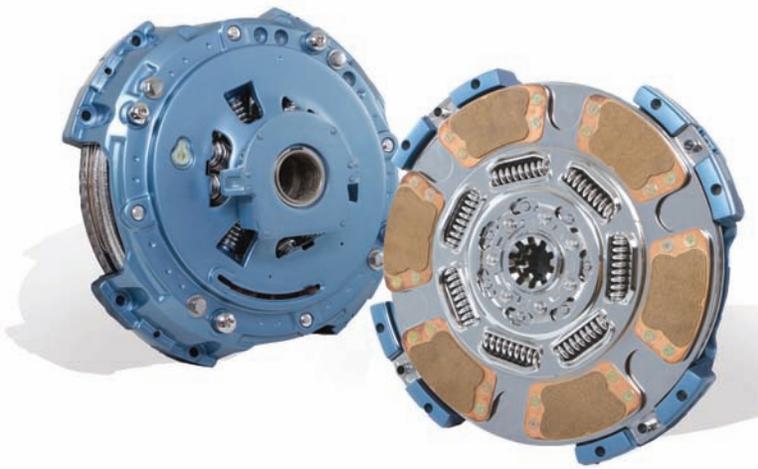
## Results

"I have always spec'd the Eaton Solo clutch ever since they came out," adds Larkins. "Gone are the days when you had to manually adjust a clutch that also needed to be lubricated often. When the Solo came out it was just another natural fit for our sleeper, linehaul operation.

"With these clutches, I like to go back to the theory that a clutch adjustment may only take about 15 minutes, but there is no such thing as a 15-minute job. You need to spend at least an hour by the time you get the truck in the door and get your hands on it and then take it back out. So any time you can eliminate something like a clutch adjustment, that's a big plus for us. Especially when you are not guaranteed to see that vehicle every PM."

An avid keeper of maintenance records, Larkins traced the performance of his Solo clutches to a 2006 new truck order that was for 115 Volvo sleepers.

"After four years when we turned in those trucks, because that is our normal trade cycle, the trucks had averaged between 500,000 and 550,000 miles of service," notes Larkins.



Choose the Solo Advantage™ to ensure that your clutch stays in constant adjustment giving it extremely long life without the need to incur additional labor costs.

"Not a single one needed a clutch replaced based upon wear. That's an important factor. When you turn in a truck Volvo and all the other truck makers do a very detailed inspection. If they even put their foot down on the clutch and the clearance isn't there, or it's grabbing, they will definitely write it up in their report.

"Granted, we go pretty easy on clutches, operating for the vast majority of the time on open highways. Nonetheless, I was quite pleased to see that we had maintained that type of performance for the life of the clutch."

Founded by W. Randolph Lee, Raven Transport is a family- and minority-owned company that has also captured numerous safety records, including being awarded the Truckload Carriers Association National Safety Contest Winner in years 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2004.

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Vehicle Group  
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Kalamazoo, MI 49003 USA  
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