

WORDS & MEANINGS
A Glossary of Everyday Words
Used in Road Transport

A.D.R. Regulations covering the carriage of Dangerous Goods

A Frame Towing assembly between vehicle and following trailer (Wagon & Drag)

Articulated Vehicle (Artic) A tractor & trailer combination where part of the trailer's weight is imposed onto the tractor unit.

ASR Device that disengages the clutch if wheelspin is detected.

Barn Doors Rear doors where hinges are fixed to both rear uprights of vehicle body.

Bath Tub Tipping body. Rounded between walls and floor (no angled corners). Used for wet loads, mostly animal by-products.

Beaver Tail A sloping end to a load bed to allow for easier loading of wheeled plant.

Bed Cargo carrying floor of vehicle.

Belly Tank Extra fuel tank fitted under chassis of trailer. Mainly used on ultra long journeys e.g. Middle East. Frowned on by many European countries.

Bent, running bent. To exceed or ignore the hours regulations. Severe penalties are incurred if caught.

Binder (Dog or Warwick) Used to tighten a chain when securing a load of timber, steel or heavy machinery.

Box: Sea container.

Box Van An unrefrigerated solid sided cargo unit.

Buckles Generic term for strap tightening devices on curtains.

Bulker Vehicle used for the carriage of bulk loads e.g. grain, cement, etc. These loads can be either tipped or blown out with air pressure (bulk blowers).

Catwalk The deck behind the cab of a tractor unit, fitted to keep the connecting hoses out of the propshaft.

Chain Used for securing loads of timber, steel or heavy machine

Change Over Pre arranged meet where two vehicles swap trailers. Usually performed at night in truckstops as close as possible to sleeping drivers.

CMR Terms and conditions for inter Europe Transport.

CMR Note Delivery note. Must be used on all inter European deliveries.

Coil Well Depression in the vehicle floor in which steel coils can sit.

Corridor (The)

Section of Motorway between the Channel Ports in NE France & Belgium border. Allows trucks to run between the ports and Belgium on Sundays & Holidays when trucks are banned from running on other French Roads.

Note! This exception does not apply to vehicles running under ADR regulations.

Cold Store Warehouse for refrigerated goods.

Coupling (1) The act of joining trailer to towing vehicle.

Coupling (2) A joining device in air or electrical lines.

Curtain Flexible load protection from roof to load bed either side of cargo unit.

Curtainsider (Tautliner) A cargo carrying unit where the curtains slide to allow easy access to the load space from the side.

Demurrage Levy charged for waiting time while loading/unloading. More common in container transport than general haulage.

Differential Gear, diff The lump in the middle of the drive axle.

Diff Lock Switch which locks up the differential gear so traction can be applied on slippery ground. Incorrect use can cause severe damage.

Dodgy Night Out A night spent at home after parking the vehicle away from your depot and claiming night out allowance. A practice more common in the days before sleeper cabs

Dolly (Dolly Hitch) Knot used for tightening ropes. Easily undone when unloading.

Double Drive (6x4) Two axles delivering motive power to the road.

Double Manning Two drivers assigned to one vehicle. Allows for greater daily distances.

Drive Axle Axle through which motive power meets the road.

Dundee Cross A method of roping the rear of a load. Normal practice would be to have two ropes from top corner to opposite bottom corner of the load. With a D.C. the ropes would be twisted around each other and taken back to the bottom corner on the same side. This enabled the position of where the ropes crossed to be adjusted up or down the load, very useful with high loads. (Thanks to Camel)

Dunnage Lengths of timber used to separate various bundles of cargo, e.g. steel, machinery or timber. Also any packaging used to prevent movement of cargo.

ECAS (electronically controlled air suspension.) A system which provides a constant ride height when in motion. At rest the suspension can be raised or lowered by the driver.

Emissions The amount of exhaust particles an engine produces.

Exhauster Secondary braking system using back pressure in the exhaust to slow the vehicle.

Fifth Wheel The coupling on a tractor unit to which the trailer is connected.

Flat Bed Cargo carrying platform without sides, can be either on a rigid vehicle or trailer.

Fly Sheet Extra protection for load. The fly sheet is spread the length of the load after it has been sheeted and roped. It's held in place

by it's own ropes and is designed to billow up to keep water off sheets.

Goal Posts Sit upside down on vehicle bed. Used when carrying round timber or pipes.

Greasy Spoon Transport Café of dubious quality. Now mostly replaced by chain restaurants, which do not permit HGV on the premises.

Greedy Boards Extra panels fixed on top of the sides of tipping trailer bodies to enable more cargo to be carried.

Gross Weight Total weight of vehicle and cargo.

Groupage Consolidated load made up of many different consignments.

Hand Ball Loading or unloading a vehicle by hand.

Half Shaft Transfers motive power from differential gear to wheel hub. Can break with sloppy clutch use.

Head Board Bulkhead across front of load carrying unit.

I I.R.U. International Road Transport Union the controlling body of International Road Transport

ISO Body which sets standards in sea container sizes.

Jack Knife Occurs when the tractor unit is stopping quicker than it's trailer. Ends with trailer tight against tractor cab. Not recommended!

Jake Brake Engine speed regulator made by the Jacobs Company. Used as a secondary braking system.

Jo-Loda Unloading system from the Jo-Loda company comprises of channels in the cargo floor into which roller skids can be fitted.

King Pin Stud under front of trailer which couples with the Fifth Wheel on tractor unit.

Landing Legs A pair of legs that are wound down to support the front of a trailer when detached from tractor unit.

Lift Axle An axle on vehicle or trailer, which can be raised up clear of the road when not required.

Lines Scots word for delivery note.

Low Loader

Special trailer with low ground clearance used for carrying plant or machinery.

Master Switch Switch that cuts off all electrical power to vehicle. Usually found on battery housing.

Mid-Lift Axle between steering axle and drive axle on Tractor Unit. Can be raised for running empty. See also **tag axle**

Ministry Term used for the various agencies regulating road haulage in the UK.

Muckaway The removal of spoil from a construction site. This branch of tipper work is noted for speed and "Top Weight"

Net Weight Weight of cargo

Night Heater Auxiliary heater for keeping cab warm when vehicle stopped.

Night Out When a shift ends away from home base and driver is unable to get home.

Notes Delivery paperwork also known as "Lines" in Scotland

On the wire Driving a vehicle with an illegal cut out switch which can isolate the tachograph and so make it seem the vehicle is parked. Severe penalties are incurred if caught.

Operator Licence, O-licence Permit required to operate any goods vehicle over 3.5 tonnes Gross weight.

Over Weight When the gross weight of vehicle or axle exceeds permitted limits.

O.T.R Over The Road; American term. Equivalent to U.K. "Tramper" or "Roamer"

Out Riggers Swing out arms along the sides of low loaders to widen the load bed. Also extending legs used for extra stability on vehicle mounted cranes.

Palm Coupling Air coupling standard in most of Europe but not of course in UK.

Pantechicon Large van usually used for furniture removals.

Payload Maximum weight of cargo allowed to be carried. Gross weight, minus Net weight = Payload.

Péage French toll road.

Plant Machinery, wheeled or static used in road making or quarrying.

P.O.D. Proof Of Delivery Signed delivery note with legible name, date and where possible a company stamp.

Queen Mary Long trailer used by the RAF for carrying aircraft.

Queue The place where many drivers spend much of their time, be it on the road or at a warehouse.

R.D.C. Regional Distribution Centre. Central point of delivery for major retail chains. Good place to find a "Queue"

Ram Hydraulic lifting post on tipping vehicles.

Ratchet Strap Load restraint comprising of a webbing strap and ratchet device to tension it. Used more now than ropes or chains.

Rear Steer Steering rear axle on trailer.

Reefer A refrigerated vehicle or trailer.

Rigid Vehicle where cab and cargo section are on same chassis.

Roller Bed Vehicle or trailer fitted with four or five sets of rollers arranged in lines front to back. Raised by air they are used mainly in the airfreight industry for loading and unloading aircraft pallets and containers. Lift the rollers and roll the load on, drop them to travel and raise them to unload. Usually accompanied by air suspension to ease operation (sloping the vehicle to help move the load). (Thanks to Gary A Wright)

Rope Hook

Used to attach ropes. Set along underside edges of cargo platform.

Scotch Wedge (usually of timber) placed behind wheels or reels of paper.

Sheet Canvas or plastic cover spread over load to keep it dry and clean.

Shunter Either a dedicated vehicle used to move trailers around a depot or for short

distances between sites, or the driver of such a vehicle. Both normally somewhat dilapidated.

Skelly Skeleton trailers without a floor, just cross members at relevant positions. Used to carry sea containers.

Sleeper Large piece of timber used as "Dunnage"

Sleeper Cab Vehicle with bunk and other home comforts if you're lucky.

Slider Mechanism that allows the "Fifth Wheel" to be moved along the chassis.

Stacker Truck Forklift truck. Used for loading /unloading

Steering Axle Front axle of vehicle.

Step Frame A two level trailer bed. Normal height over the "Fifth Wheel", then lower for the rest of bed.

Suzie (Suzy) An air line or electrical cable connected from tractor unit to trailer.

Swan Neck, goose neck Front section of Low Loader trailer. Connects the high coupling section to the much lower bed.

Swap Body Demountable cargo unit.

T Forms Customs forms used when Duty is payable on cargo

Tacho, tachograph. Instrument for recording vehicle movement, speed and hours worked.

Tag axle Lifting rear axle found either on 3-axle tractor unit or 3 axle rigid. Can be raised when running empty or to gain traction. Noted for its uncomfortable ride.

Tail Lift Powered loading Platform at rear of vehicle to aid loading/unloading.

Tilt A cargo-carrying unit with a removable framework covered by a sheet (or Tilt). Used mainly on cross continental transport.

Tip To unload.

T.I.R. World agreement that allows cargo to cross borders under customs seal. Used for trips outside of the EU or exhibition goods.

Top Weight The maximum permitted weight for the vehicle. Mostly used to describe a bulk load e.g. soil, feed cement etc.

Traction Pulling another companies trailer on their work.

Tractor Unit The motive power and cab section of an articulated vehicle.

Trade Plates Special number plates which allow unlicensed or untaxed vehicles to be driven on public roads.

Tramper (Roamer) A driver who goes wherever the next load takes them.

Trombone Trailer A trailer that can be extended to carry long loads.

Trunker A vehicle or driver who runs the same route every shift. Often at night.

Twin Steer Two sets of steering axles at front of vehicle.

Twist Locks Used to hold sea container in place on vehicle.

Ullage Space left in tank or drum to allow for expansion of liquid.

Unladen Weight The weight of the vehicle when empty

Van body. Panel sided vehicle or trailer.

VOR Vehicle Off Road i.e. out of service waiting repair.

Wagon and Drag A rigid vehicle towing a separate trailer.

Woods (Dunnage). Timbers to lay under steel etc.

Zoll German customs post

Z Plates German equivalent of trade plates

Written by Ted Boucher and others. No 8 in a series published by the Professional Drivers Association.