



Logistics Terminology

ABS (Anti-lock Braking System) – Computer, sensors and solenoid valves which together monitor wheel speed and modulate braking force if wheel lockup is sensed during braking. Helps the driver retain control of the vehicle during heavy braking on slippery roads.

Air Ride Suspension – Suspension which supports the load on air-filled rubber bags rather than steel springs. Compressed air is supplied by the same engine-driven air compressor and reservoir tanks which provide air to the air brake system.

Anchor – Apply brakes for an emergency stop.

Bill of Lading – Itemized list of goods contained in a shipment.

Blind Spot – Areas around a commercial vehicle that are not visible to the driver either through the windshield, side windows or mirrors.

Boat – Tractor operating without a trailer. Also refers to straight truck.

Gross Weight – Combined weight of all loads, gear and supplies on a vehicle.

Local Carrier – Company that provides local (within a town, city or municipality) pick-up and delivery.

Commercial Driver's License – License which authorizes an individual to operate commercial motor vehicles and buses over 26,000 pounds gross vehicle weight.

Container – Standard-sized rectangular box used to transport freight by ship, rail and highway.

Front End – Auxiliary axle assembly equipped with a fifth wheel (coupling device), towed by a semitrailer and supporting the front of, and towing, another semitrailer.

Tractor Trailer – Combination of a tractor and two semitrailers connected in tandem by a converter dolly.

Electronic On-board Recorder – Cab-mounted device which electronically records data such as truck speed, engine rpm, idle time and other information useful to trucking management.

Exempt Carrier – Company which transports commodities exempted from Interstate Commerce Commission economic regulation.

Freight Carrier – Company in the business of transporting freight belonging to others.

Hazardous Materials – Hazardous materials, as classified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Transport of hazardous materials is strictly regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Hours of Service – U.S. Department of Transportation safety regulations which govern the hours of service of commercial vehicle drivers engaged in interstate trucking operations.

Intermodal Transportation – The transportation movement involving more than one mode (e.g., rail/motor, motor/air, rail/water).

Just-in-Time – Manufacturing system which depends on frequent, small deliveries of parts and supplies to keep on-site inventory to a minimum.

Landing Gear – Retractable legs which support the front of a semitrailer when its not coupled to a trailer.

Long Combination Vehicle – In general, vehicles longer than a standard doubles rig. Examples of LCVs which are permitted in some U.S. western states and eastern toll roads: Twin 48-foot trailers; triple 28-foot trailers.

American Trucking Association

950 N. Glebe Road | Suite 210 | Arlington, VA | 22203-4181
703.838.1896 | www.truckline.com

Book – Book carried by truck drivers in which they record their hours of service and duty status for each 24-hour period. Required for interstate commercial trucking by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Local driver – Truck driver who travels a set route from city to city and typically returns home after each shift. Also known as a regional driver.

City driver – Truck driver who picks up and delivers packages along a city route. Drivers typically run the same route everyday, returning home after each shift. Also known as a city or P&D driver.

Less-than-truckload (LTL) – A quantity of freight less than that required for the application of truckload (TL) rate; usually less than 10,000 pounds.

Consolidated carrier – Trucking company which consolidates less-than-truckload cargo for multiple destinations on one vehicle.

Owner operator – Truck driver who owns and operates his own truck.

Over-the-road driver – Truck driver who travels cross-country to deliver freight and usually sleeps within a berth in the truck cab. Typically averages over 100,000 miles per year.

Local pickup and delivery – Pickup and delivery. May also be referred to as a city driver.

Gross weight – Weight of the cargo being hauled.

Highway route – Truck route with frequent delivery stops.

Private carrier – Business which operates trucks primarily for the purpose of transporting its own products and raw materials. The principle business activity of a private carrier is not transportation.

Over-the-road, line-haul and local – Different categories of drivers include over-the-road, line-haul and local.

Refrigerated trailer – Refrigerated trailer with insulate walls and a self-powered refrigeration unit. Most commonly used for transporting food.

Semitrailer – Truck trailer supported at the rear by its own wheels and at the front by a fifth wheel mounted to a tractor or a dolly.

Sleeping compartment – Sleeping compartment mounted behind a truck cab, sometimes attached to the cab or even designed to be an integral part of it.

Fifth wheel – Fifth wheel mounted to a mechanism that allows it to be moved back and forth for the purpose of adjusting the distribution of weight on the tractor's axles.

Semitrailer – Vehicle which carries cargo in a body mounted to its chassis, rather than on a trailer towed by a vehicle.

Truckload – The quantity of freight required to fill a trailer; usually more than 10,000 pounds.

Carrier – Trucking company which dedicates trailers to a single shipper's cargo, as opposed to an LTL (Less Than Truckload) carrier which transports the consolidated cargo of several shippers and makes multiple deliveries.

Semitractor – Truck designed primarily to pull a semitrailer by means of a fifth wheel mounted over the rear axle.

Semitractor trailer – Tractor and semitrailer combination.

Tractor trailer – Truck, tractor or trailer with three axles grouped together at the rear.

Leasing – Leasing a company's vehicle to another transportation provider for a single trip.

American Trucking Association

950 N. Glebe Road | Suite 210 | Arlington, VA | 22203-4181
703.838.1896 | www.truckline.com