



## LESSONS LEARNED

IDENTIFY  
DOCUMENT  
DISSEMINATE



## Specialized Trailer Transport

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***When arranging for the transport of specialized trailers, timely communication of detailed and verified information between participating parties ensures a safe, efficient, and economical movement.***

### Summary

As the result of an increased demand for relocating specialized trailers between geographically distant sites using drive away–tow away carriers, best business practices have been identified.

### Details

As part of the trailer relocation process, informal reviews of the overall execution of the completed process are performed. As a result of these reviews, best business practices have been identified to ensure that trailer relocations are done in a safe, efficient, and economical manner.

### Lessons Learned

Depending upon the trailer type involved, the following activities should be addressed prior to scheduling a pickup. Any information/status pertaining to the trailer and its contents should be obtained from the requestor and thoroughly verified through physical review and/or photographic evidence prior to it being disseminated to the carrier. Collect the following information at a minimum:

*a. Dimensions, Weights, and Basic Characteristics of the Trailer.*

Obtain both empty and loaded weight. Identify air conditioner units, antennas, spare tires, tool boxes and other structures that may add to the dimension of the trailer. Without accurate dimensions or weights, the



carrier cannot determine the equipment type or if over dimensional/overweight permits are needed. If permits are needed, the hours and/or the transport route may be restricted. This may cause increased costs and delays in delivery schedule.

*b. Verify the Trailer's Coupling Device Type*

Make sure that the carrier understands what type of coupling device the trailer employs. If a ball hitch trailer, communicate the ball size and its height to the carrier PRIOR to their arrival. This ensures that the carrier arrives with the proper equipment.

*c. Verify the Trailer's Contents*

Obtain and verify a detailed listing of the contents of the trailer. Ensure that once verified, nothing else is loaded into the trailer. Perform a review of the inventory list and during physical verification, look for regulated hazardous materials and/or other material/equipment that was not inventoried or may be fragile or should be packed/repacked/tied down prior to transport. If regulated hazardous materials are to be transported in the trailer, make sure they are properly prepared, loaded, secured and documented. Communicate the presence of hazardous materials to the carrier PRIOR to pick-up. This ensures that both the shipper and the driver are aware they must be Hazardous Materials trained.

*d. Verify the Trailer's License Plate Number and Status*

Verify that a license plate has been mounted on the trailer and is correct and current. If one must be ordered, ensure that it arrives and is mounted prior to requesting a pickup. A General Service Administration license plate may take up to 2 weeks to receive.

*e. Verify the Trailer's Property Number (if applicable)*

Ensure that, if the trailer is DOE Property, the property number is correct and that property management personnel are aware of the movement so that the appropriate transaction documentation can be completed when the trailer is relocated.

*f. Verify the Trailer's Annual DOT Inspection Status*

Most relocated trailers will meet the DOT definition of "commercial motor vehicle". Verify that the trailer's annual inspection is current and will not expire while in transit. Make sure a copy of the inspection document is placed in the shipping file.

*g. Verify Condition of the Trailer's Safety Systems*

Even if the annual DOT inspection is current, effect a physical verification of the trailer's structural integrity, and that lights and brakes are in proper operational condition before scheduling a pickup. This ensures that any issues are noted and corrected BEFORE the carrier's arrival. Corrosion/dirt may cause issues with wiring connections that could affect lighting and/or brake operations. Also, if applicable, check step mechanism(s) to ensure that they are locked or can be locked so that they do not deploy while in transit.



*After the previous information has been obtained and reviewed, the following activities should be addressed:*

*a. Communicate Contact Information*

Verify appropriate recipient names and contact information, including days and hours of operation of the receiving facility and any other pertinent information needed to ensure an efficient delivery. Pickup and delivery schedules should consider the scheduled transit time to reduce waiting or detention time by the carrier.

*b. Select a Safe, Compliant and Economical Carrier*

Review available safety records of the carriers you are working with, ensure your rates are documented and are inclusive of all services that are contemplated during the movement. It is good practice to include those scenarios that may occur, such as tire repairs and other emergency services that the carrier may have to provide. Provide all applicable information to the carrier in order to receive a well-developed rate quote.

*After the carrier has been selected and the pickup arranged, the following activities should be addressed:*

*a. Provide the Driver with Information at Pickup*

Prior to release of the trailer for transport, provide the driver with contact names/numbers for both the destination AND the origin for use when in transit. Document and brief the driver on required communication protocols and service authorizations if issues arise in transit. Discuss situations and responses in case of breakdowns and delays. This information may be part of a shipping packet that also includes the signed bill of lading and any other pertinent documents for the shipment.

*b. Provide Service Provider with Trailer Keys*

Finally, before the driver leaves with the trailer, provide the keys. The carrier must have the keys while in transit. Department of Transportation and Law Enforcement may require access to the inside of the trailer and the movement may be delayed if the keys are not available.

## Contact

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## Reviewer

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## Priority Descriptor

Green / Good Work Practice

## Work Function

Packing and Transportation

## Hazards

Management Control

## ISM Category

Develop/Implement Controls