

Learning Shipper-Talk and Carrier-Speak

If you are new to logistics, working in a warehouse and dealing with inbound or outbound freight might seem like a no-brainer, but you'd be surprised how much there is to learn. The first thing you absolutely must know is the language—shipping language, that is. If you overheard this conversation, would you be able to decipher all the acronyms?

“Do you have a LTL, FTL, or PTL load going out? If it's LTL, make sure you get the right NMFC and make a note if you need a LG, and of course, the DV on the shipment has to be on the BOL. Make sure we are listed as the CNOR, not the CNEE. We will also need copies of the BOL and POD and any OS&Ds when it is all said and done. And just so you know, if a TONU is cited, you may have to pay those fees.”

SHIPPER LINGO YOU SHOULD LEARN

LTL – LESS THAN TRUCKLOAD

The definition of an LTL shipment varies, but they typically consist of five pallets and under, or are sometimes designated by a weight of less than 5,000 pounds. When you ship LTL, your items are transported with goods from other shippers and may be transferred one or more times en-route to their final destination.

NMFC – NATIONAL MOTOR FREIGHT CLASSIFICATION

The NMFC was created to standardize pricing for freight shipments. Every commodity shipped in the US belongs to one of eighteen freight classes, determined by four factors; shipment density, stow-ability, handling, and liability.

FTL – FULL TRUCK LOAD

If you have enough product to fill an entire truck, you can ship FTL, and your freight goes on a long haul trip straight to its destination. Unlike LTL shipments, FTL shipments do not transfer to other trucks or stop at any terminals mid-haul.

PTL – PARTIAL TRUCK LOAD

If you have too much product for an LTL shipment, but not enough product for FTL – PTL may be the right fit for you. This type of shipment typically stays on one truck from origin to destination and is not accessible during the trip.

FOB (FREE ON BOARD)

There are four types of FOB. There is FOB place of origin- freight collect, FOB place of origin – freight prepaid, FOB place of destination – freight collect, and finally, FOB place of destination – freight prepaid.

BOL – BILL OF LADING

A bill of lading is a detailed, legally binding contract between a freight carrier and a shipper. Every BOL includes the names and addresses of the shipper and carrier, pickup date, shipment description, freight class, packaging details, and hazardous material designations.

POD – PROOF OF DELIVERY

Proof of Delivery is paperwork signed by the consignee indicating receipt of a load. A BOL often doubles as a POD upon delivery, and it must be signed for a carrier to get paid.

OS&D REPORT – OVERAGE, SHORTAGE, AND DAMAGE

A CNEE can file this report if there are issues with a shipment they received. An overage occurs when the recipient gets more product than they ordered, while a shortage is the exact opposite. Shipment items that are unusable or unsellable are considered damaged.

TONU – TRUCK ORDERED BUT NOT USED

If a truck comes to pick up a shipment, and the load isn't ready – that's TONU. If it's your fault, you may have to pay a fine to compensate the carrier for their time and resources.

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LG – LIFTGATE

A liftgate is a power-operated tailgate capable of lifting pallets from street level to the floor of a trailer. Shipper locations with no loading docks often have lift gates, as do many LTL truck fleets.

DV – DECLARED VALUE

A shipment's declared value is the monetary value of a shipment as reported by you, the shipper. It serves as a basis for determining shipping charges and can also act as a tool to limit carrier liability for damage and loss. The acronyms don't stop with shipping quotes. There are also a few important terms related to paperwork and performance that are worth knowing.

CNOR / CNEE – CONSIGNOR OR CONSIGNEE

This one is simple – a CNOR or consignor is the person sending a shipment, and a CNEE or consignee is the person receiving a shipment.





Carrier/Driver-Speak is a Unique Language

Here are some of the more amusing terms that originated with CB language but are still being used today via cell phones.

ALLIGATOR – as in, “There’s an alligator in road up ahead, watch out!” Blown out tire shred

ANTLER ALLEY – a deer crossing or stretch of road that has a heavy deer population

BEAR – a police officer

BIG SLAB – an Interstate

BULL DOG – a Mack truck

BUMPER STICKER – a car driving too close to the back of a truck

CASH REGISTER – a toll booth

CHICKEN COUP – a weigh station

DOUBLE NICKEL – 55 miles per hour

FLIP FLOP – a U-turn

PARKING LOT – a truck hauling cars

SALT SHAKER – a snowplow

TRAVEL AGENT – a dispatcher

WIGGLE WAGONS – a double or triple trailer truck

Learning these terms is not as difficult as learning a foreign language, but it can be a bit baffling if you don’t work in the industry. As with any new job, learning as much as you can about the product or service you are working with, from the people who have the most experience, will be your ticket to success.



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