

Terminal Tractor/Yard Spotter

Used Yard Spotter Seattle - Tow tractors, also called tow tugs or towing tractors are popular for moving loads horizontally in airports, arenas, warehouses, manufacturing plants and other large buildings. Tow tractors are responsible for moving multiple trailers in a train. Some are designed specifically to tow large aircraft in order to position them into and out of airport terminals and hangers. All tow tractors use the concept of tractive effort to move loads. Tractive effort is the amount of traction a unit has on the ground. Tractive effort says that the heavier the load, the more tractive effort is required. The tow tractor lifts a portion of the load during towing while ensuring the wheels on the load still remain on the ground. The load is partially lifted by use of the tow tractor's hydraulic mast which is specifically designed to produce downforce on the drive wheel immediately beneath it, increasing the tractive effort. Traction allows the machine to deliver very large and heavy loads. Types of Tow Tractors Two types of towing tractors include heavy-duty tow tractors and load carriers. Load Carriers Industries such as e-commerce, manufacturing, and airport baggage and parcel systems must regularly move many individual and varying sized items to or from a single location. Tow tugs or load carrier tow tractors are excellent for these jobs as they can maneuver single items stacked on wheeled platforms for streamlined transport. These load carrier tow tractors fall under the material handling equipment industry which includes other machines such as pallet jacks, forklifts and cranes. These units only transport loads at ground level and do not lift or lower items from shelving or off the ground. This means that the load has already been on wheels or placed on a wheeled platform before transport. The wheeled platforms are called bogies, trollies or skates. The tow tractor attaches to the trolley and operates similarly to how train cars are attached to a locomotive. Generally, the steel coupling on the tow tug's male-end joins to the front trolley's female-end. The trolley's back portion has a male-end steel coupling that can be used to connect a variety of trollies to a single tug. Tow tractors with a train of trollies enable a wider range in the type of items that can be transported and in the types of conditions they can be transported. Different trolley types are on the market to facilitate better transportation customization. Many trollies can be connected since they are compatible with one another. This means several different types of trollies can be used in a single train allowing greater flexibility for operations. A key benefit of using a load carrier tow tractor is that operators can enjoy a clear view instead of relying on forklifts. Additionally, load carrier tow tractors move their units in a forward-only way and this drastically decreases safety concerns associated with forklifts traveling in reverse. This design is excellent for locations that have a high level of safety such as manufacturing locations and airports. Towing solutions are a good alternative to traditional forklifts to handle many single items. Tugs are simple to move and provide a safe transport option. The operator doesn't require a license, which is another benefit compared to forklifts. Tow tractor operators do not need licenses since they don't lift loads off of the ground. There are three subtypes of load carrier tow tractors: 1. Pedestrian; 2. Stand-in; and 3. Rider-seated. Pedestrian Tow Tractors Pedestrian tow tractors go by many names including electric tow tractor, electric tug, or electric tugger. These units are walk-behind models that move wheeled loads. These compact machines are simple to use and can maneuver easily. Stand-in Tow Tractors The most common design for businesses that rely on horizontal manufacturing transport and order picking are stand-in tow tractors. They provide a secure platform for the driver to operate while still having a smaller footprint than that of the rider-seated tow tractors. Rider-Seated Tow Tractors Similar to stand-in tow tractors, rider-seated units have a seated operator platform. These types of load carrier tow tractors are popular where loads are transported over longer distances, such as airport baggage systems where checked baggage is transported from the check-in counter at the front of an airport to the aircraft at the terminal, often a great distance from one another. These rider-seated options help to decrease driver fatigue allowing for greater efficiency. Heavy Duty Tow Tractors Aviation relies on the pushback concept for moving big passenger and cargo aircraft. Pushback is the process of pushing an aircraft back from the terminal by means not originating from the

aircraft's personal power. Pushback is achieved by employing pushback tugs or pushback tractors. Pushback tractors are designed with a low profile design to enable them to move under the aircraft's nose in order to attach to the aircraft. Enough ground friction is required to move the weighted aircraft, so these models need to be heavy themselves. A typical tractor for large aircraft weighs up to 54 tons. They usually have a driver's cab that can be raised and lowered to increase visibility when reversing. The pushback tow tractor and pushback tug are also employed when taxiing the aircraft is not an option. They are commonly used to move the machine into and outside of aircraft maintenance hangars. The two subtypes of pushback tow tractors include conventional tow tractors and towbarless tow tractors. Conventional Pushback Tow Tractors Conventional units rely on a tow bar to connect the tug to the aircraft's nose landing gear. The tow bar is laterally fixed at the nose landing gear; however, it is possible to make height adjustments with slight vertical movements. The tow bar that attaches to the tug can pivot vertically and laterally. Acting like a giant lever, the tow bar can rotate the nose landing gear. There is a towbar and precise tow fitting that acts as an adapter between the standard-sized tow pin and on the landing gear of the aircraft. On heavy towbars for large aircrafts, the towbar rides on its own wheels when not connected to an aircraft. Attached to the wheels, the hydraulic jacking mechanism allows the towbar to lift to the proper height to mate with the aircraft and tug. The same mechanism is employed in reverse to raise the towbar wheels off the ground for pushback. The towbar can be connected at the front or the rear of the tractor, depending on whether the aircraft will be pushed or pulled. Towbarless Pushback Tow Tractors Towbarless tractors do not use a towbar; they scoop up the nose landing gear and lift it off the ground, allowing the tug to maneuver the aircraft. This design facilitates higher speeds greater aircraft control and can eliminate the necessity of having a worker inside of the cockpit to apply the brakes. The main advantage of a towbarless tug is simplicity; there is no need to maintain multiple towbars. Directly connecting the tug to the landing gear allows operators to have better responsiveness and control while moving the aircraft.