

## Terminal Tractor/Yard Spotter

Used Yard Spotter Kent - Tow tractors, sometimes call towing tractors or tow tugs, are vehicles used in transporting loads horizontally in warehouses, manufacturing plants, airports, arenas and other large facilities. These machines can tow numerous trailers in a train or snake-like formation. 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 refers to the total amount of traction a vehicle deploys on the ground. Tractive effort says that the heavier the load, the more tractive effort is required. The unit works by lifting a part of the load while it is towing; however, the load's wheels stay 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. The tow tractor is capable of transporting very heavy and large loads thanks to the traction it provides.

**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. The category that load carrier tow tractor models fall into includes forklift trucks, cranes and pallet jacks. These units only transport loads at ground level and do not lift or lower items from shelving or off the ground. Therefore, the load must already be on wheels or on a wheeled platform, ready to be transported. Wheeled platforms are called skates, trollies and bogies. 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 back of the trolley has a male-end steel coupling that can then be used to attach multiple trollies onto a single tow tug, transporting all the trollies in a train-like formation. These machines can transport a variety of items in varying conditions. The availability of many different types of trollies also allows for greater customization in transporting items. Many trollies can be connected since they are compatible with one another. Since multiple trolley types can be utilized in a single train, there is flexibility. An additional benefit of operating with load carrier tow tractors as opposed to forklifts is the unobstructed view offered by a tow tractor, increasing the safety of work areas. Load carrier tow tractors transport trollies in a forward direction which decreases the safety concerns common with reverse forklift operations. This is vital for safety-sensitive places including airports and manufacturing facilities. Towing many items at once saves time and money compared to relying on forklifts to move single things. Tugs are easy to move and safe to use. One benefit of these tow tugs is that an operator usually does not require a license. Tow tractor operators do not need licenses since they don't lift loads off of the ground. There are three kinds of load carrier tow tractor units to choose from; pedestrian, stand-in and rider-seated.

**Pedestrian Tow Tractors** A walk-behind model that can transport wheeled loads is called a pedestrian tow tractor. These machines may go by the names of electric hand tug, electric tugger, electric tug or tow tractor. These machines are simple to use, extremely maneuverable and very compact.

**Stand-in Tow Tractors** Stand-in tow tractors are the most popular design for industries that involve order picking and horizontal transport in manufacturing. 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** The rider-seated tow tractors are similar to the stand-in tow tractors with the exception they provide a seated platform for the driver. 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. Reducing rider fatigue, the rider-seated models deliver more efficiency.

**Heavy Duty Tow Tractors** The pushback concept is commonly used in aviation for cargo and large passenger planes. Pushing an aircraft back from the airport terminal without

using the aircraft's own power is the pushback concept. Heavy-duty tow tractors are known as pushback tugs or pushback tractors complete this task. 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. Since the aircraft weight is heavy, these units need to be heavy in order to retain adequate ground friction to move the aircraft. 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. There are two subtypes of pushback tow tractors: 1. Conventional; and 2. Towbarless. Conventional Pushback Tow Tractors Conventional tugs use a tow bar to connect the tug to the nose landing gear of the aircraft. Laterally attached to the nose landing gear, the tow tractor can make certain slight vertical height adjustments if needed. At the end that attaches to the tug, the tow bar may pivot freely laterally and vertically. The tow bar functions as a sizeable lever to facilitate nose landing gear rotation. Each aircraft type has a unique tow fitting so the towbar also acts as an adapter between the standard-sized tow pin on the tug and the type-specific fitting on the aircraft's landing gear. Heavy-duty towbars required for sizeable aircraft ride on their own wheels when they are disconnected from the machine. The wheels are attached to a hydraulic jacking mechanism which can lift the towbar to the correct height to mate to both the airplane and the tug, and once this is accomplished the same mechanism is used in reverse to raise the tow bar wheels from the ground during the pushback process. The towbar is capable of being connected at the tractor's rear or front, depending on if the machine needs to be pulled or pushed. Depending on whether the aircraft needs to be pushed or pulled, the towbar can be attached to the front or rear of the tractor. Towbarless Pushback Tow Tractors Towbarless tractors, as their name suggests, don't rely on a towbar. Instead, these machines scoop up the nose landing gear to lift it off of the ground so the tug can move the plane. This allows better control of the aircraft and higher speeds; it may also eliminate the need to have a worker in the cockpit to apply the aircraft's brakes. Simplicity is the main advantage of the towbarless tugs since it is not necessary to maintain a variety of towbars. Greater control and responsiveness while moving the aircraft is achieved with this direct connection of the tug to the landing gear.