

Terminal Tractor/Yard Spotter

Used Yard Spotter Bellevue - 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. Tow tractors are responsible for moving multiple trailers in a train. Certain tow tractors can transport helicopters and giant airplanes for the purpose of positioning inside and outside airport hangars and terminals. The tractive effort concept is how loads move from place to place. Tractive effort refers to the total amount of traction a vehicle deploys on the ground. The heavier the load is, the more tractive effort is needed. Based on this principle, the tow tractor works by lifting a part of the load it is towing while making sure the load's wheels 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. The tow tractor is capable of transporting very heavy and large loads thanks to the traction it provides. Types of Tow Tractors Heavy-duty tow tractors and load carriers are two types of tow tractors. 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. Load carrier tow tugs transport loads at ground level only, rather than lifting or lowering off the ground or from shelving or other hard to reach areas. 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 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. 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. Trolley types differ to provide customization options. Trollies can connect together and are compatible. 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. Further, load carrier tow tractors tow their trollies behind them in a forward-only direction which decreases the safety concerns created by forklifts operating in reverse. These safety considerations are of special importance in busy areas such as manufacturing floors and airports. It is more economical to tow multiple items when possible with a tug than using a forklift truck to transport single items. They are safe and easy to maneuver. 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 subtypes of load carrier tow tractors: 1. Pedestrian; 2. Stand-in; and 3. 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 Popular for industries that conduct order picking and horizontal transport for manufacturing, the stand-in tow tractors are the best design. These units deliver a secure driver platform and deliver a smaller footprint compared to the rider-seated models. Rider-Seated Tow Tractors Rider-seated tow tractors are similar to stand-in models except they offer a seated platform for the operator. Rider-seated models are used for moving loads longer distances. They are popular for airport luggage transport to move checked baggage from the check-in counter to the aircraft parked at the terminal. Reducing rider fatigue, the rider-seated models deliver more efficiency. Heavy Duty Tow Tractors In the aviation industry, large passenger and cargo planes usually employ the concept of pushback. Pushback

refers to the process of pushing an aircraft back from an airport terminal by some means other than the aircraft's own power. Heavy-duty tow tractors are known as pushback tugs or pushback tractors complete this task. Pushback tractors are built with a low-profile to allow them to move underneath the nose of the aircraft so that it can attach. Enough ground friction is required to move the weighted aircraft, so these models need to be heavy themselves. A common tractor for moving large aircraft can weigh in up to fifty-four tons. Their driver's cab has the ability to be lowered and raised for increased visibility during 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 pushback tow tractors come in two subtypes, the towbarless and the conventional. Conventional Pushback Tow Tractors Conventional tugs use a tow bar to connect the tug to the nose landing gear of the aircraft. 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 is able to pivot vertically and laterally at the end that connects to the tug. Acting like a giant lever, the tow bar can rotate the nose landing gear. Every aircraft has a special tow fitting and the towbar functions as an adapter between the fitting on the landing gear and the standard-sized tow pin. On heavy towbars for large aircrafts, the towbar rides on its own wheels when not connected to an aircraft. The hydraulic jacking mechanism is attached to the wheels, allowing the towbar to lift to the correct height in order to mate with the tug and the aircraft. The same means are used in reverse during the pushback process to raise the towbar wheels from the ground. 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 work without a towbar and scoop up the aircrafts' nose landing gear to lift it off of the ground instead. 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.