

Terminal Tractor/Yard Spotter

Used Yard Spotter Massachusetts - 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. They are capable of towing several trailers in a train formation. Some are designed specifically to tow large aircraft in order to position them into and out of airport terminals and hangars. 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. The heavier the load is, the more tractive effort is needed. The tow tractor lifts a portion of the load during towing while ensuring the wheels on the load still remain on the ground. The tractive effort is increased by the unit's hydraulic mast. This has been engineered to produce downforce on the drive wheel directly under the mast. The tow tractor is capable of transporting very heavy and large loads thanks to the traction it provides. Types of Tow Tractors There are two basic types of tow tractors: 1. Load carriers; and 2. Heavy-duty tow tractors; Load Carriers Many industries including airport baggage divisions, manufacturing, parcel transportation and e-commerce rely on moving items of various sizes to and from different locations. Load carrier tow tractors or tow tugs are especially useful for these types of applications because they allow the single items to be gathered and stacked on the wheeled platforms, ready to be attached for tow and transport by the tow tractor. 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. In order to be ready for transport, items must be secured on a wheeled platform or already on wheels to use the tow tractor. Bogies, skates and trollies are other names for wheeled platforms. The tow tug is attached to the trolley similar to train cars being attached to a locomotive. Generally, the steel coupling on the tow tug's male-end joins to the front trolley's female-end. Trollies move in a train-like system thanks to the male-end steel coupling on the back which can connect to numerous units and allow a single tug to transport them. Tow tractors are capable of moving many machines in a variety of conditions. The availability of many different types of trollies also allows for greater customization in transporting items. Most trollies types are compatible with each other, meaning they can be connected together. Different kinds of trollies can be maneuvered in a single train, creating flexible transport options. Load carrier tow tractors deliver a clear view for the operator which can be better than relying on forklifts. 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. Towing many items at once saves time and money compared to relying on forklifts to move single things. Tugs are simple to move and provide a safe transport option. One benefit of these tow tugs is that an operator usually does not require a license. No license is necessary since these units do not lift loads up from the ground like cranes, and forklifts that require licensing. 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. It is compact, maneuverable and easy to use. 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 Rider-seated tow tractors are similar to stand-in models except they offer a seated platform for the operator. 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 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. This pushback process is done by using specially designed heavy duty tow tractors called pushback tractors or pushback tugs. Pushback tugs feature a low-profile enabling them to travel under the aircraft's nose for easy attachment. Because of the added heavy weight of the aircraft, these tow tractors must be heavy enough to retain enough traction on the ground in order to move the aircraft. Large aircraft tractors can weigh as much as fifty-four tons. These models have a driver's cab that has the option of being raised or lowered during reverse for better visibility. 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 that attaches to the tug can pivot vertically and laterally. 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. 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 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 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. 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.