

Terminal Tractor/Yard Spotter

Used Yard Spotter Spokane - 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. Tractive effort is how these machines transport 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. 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 and load carriers easily transport single items that have been deposited on wheeled platforms and move them with ease. 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. 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. Usually, the tow tug has a male-end steel coupling that couples to the female-end fixed to the front of the trolley. 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. Trolley types differ to provide customization options. 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. 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 solutions are a good alternative to traditional forklifts to handle many single items. 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. This is because the load is not lifted from the ground so it does not fall under the usual restrictions and licensing required of standard forklifts, cranes and other load lifting equipment. 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 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. 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 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 tugs feature a low-profile enabling them to travel under the aircraft's nose for easy attachment. Enough ground friction is required to move the weighted aircraft, so these models need to be heavy themselves. 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. While the vehicle is referred to as a pushback tug or pushback tow tractor, it is also used to tow aircraft in areas where taxiing the aircraft is not practical or safe, such as moving large aircraft in and out of 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. 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. 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. 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 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 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. 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.