

Terminal Tractor/Yard Spotter

Used Yard Spotter PEI - 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. These machines can tow numerous trailers in a train or snake-like formation. 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. The complete amount of traction a vehicle utilizes on the ground. The heavier the load is, the more tractive effort is needed. The unit works by lifting a part of the load while it is towing; however, the load's wheels stay 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 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. 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. Load carrier tow tractor models are categorized in the material handling equipment that covers cranes, forklifts and pallet jacks. 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 tug is attached to the trolley similar to train cars being attached to a locomotive. Typically, the tow tug features a steel coupling male-end that attaches to a female-end on the trolley's front. 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 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. 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. Load carrier tow tractors transport trollies in a forward direction which decreases the safety concerns common with reverse forklift operations. 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. Tugs are easy to move and safe to use. The operator doesn't require a license, which is another benefit compared to forklifts. 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. Three subtypes of load carrier tow tractors include rider-seated, stand-in and pedestrian.

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 compact machines are simple to use and can maneuver easily.

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 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. 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. 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. 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. 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 unit is called a pushback tow tractor or pushback tug but it is additionally used to move aircraft in situations where taxiing is not safe or practical including into and outside of aircraft maintenance. The pushback tow tractors come in two subtypes, the towbarless and the conventional. 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 are 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. 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, 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 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. By connecting the tug directly to the aircraft's landing gear tug operators have better control and responsiveness when maneuvering.