



How to stop carriers
losing pallets

Linked docket
Tracking

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How to stop carriers losing pallets



Pallets Off = Pallets On

Carriers have a high risk of losing pallets. One of the key things in managing any carrier pallet account is to ensure that any pallets transferred on to your account are either transferred off it or the empty pallets are dehiored to CHEP or Loscam.

This is not as easy as it first appears. Many carriers pick up pallets of product for delivery to multiple destinations. Quite often the pallets picked up are bound for customers in another state. Generally, the physical movement of pallets goes relatively smoothly and end up where they are supposed to. The pallet documentation related to these movements is a different matter and can be a basket case.

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An example

The pickup driver returns to his local depot and hands in his documentation. The documentation can get split up into different delivery regions and the transfer on pallet docket finds its way to the local pallet controller.

The other documentation accompanies the pallets to the interstate transport depot. It is this depot that becomes responsible for ensuring that the pallets are transferred off the carrier's account to the receivers.

What could possibly go wrong?

Some carriers load the pallets on to their local delivery fleet and rely on their drivers to raise the relevant pallet transfers using handwritten pallet docket books.

Driver Risk



It is a big responsibility for the driver. Some considerations are:

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- The driver would need to know if the pallets were to be transferred direct from the sender to the receiver.
- The driver would need to know the pallet account number of the receiver.
- If the receiver does not use a pallet account, then he needs to record that the pallets were either exchanged on delivery or are owed.
- When he gets back to his depot someone, other than the driver, needs to unload the pallets and check them off. Pallets delivered need to be accounted for by either a transfer, an IOU docket or the return of empty pallets.
- If the driver's pallet docket book goes missing, then many pallets could be lost.
- If an agency driver is used, then he may not be familiar with your processes and pallets could be lost.



If you must rely on drivers to raise your pallet dockets, then losses are likely. Even if pallet dockets are raised in the despatch office there is a possibility of errors being made. Confusion over whether a delivery should be a direct transfer from the sender to the receiver could result in pallet dockets not being raised by the carrier.

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Risk Minimisation



It would make sense to raise all your off pallet documentation at the point of pickup and use a common job number or reference to link the off dockets with the on docket so that you take the delivery driver or delivery depot out of the equation and you can see that pallets off equals pallets on.

Some pallet control systems have functionality called Linked Docket Tracking which makes this possible.

If this is a way to minimise the risk of pallet losses, why do so few carriers do it?

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Barriers to Change

Some barriers to implementing this are:

- **Resource constraints at the pickup depot.**

When the pick trucks arrive at the depot and hand their paperwork in the off dockets need to be raised before the documentation is split up into delivery regions.

In theory this could be done but it could mean that someone needs to be on hand to raise the dockets as soon as is possible when the truck returns to the depot.

This would be more work for the pickup depot than before as instead off the delivery driver or delivery depot raising the dockets the pickup depot has to do it. On the other hand, they would not need to raise pallet dockets for pallets coming in from their other depots as dockets would have been raised by these depots.

- **Pallet Control System**

Each depot would need to have details of delivery points for all depots regardless of which delivery region they are located. These details would have to include whether the delivery point accepts pallet transfers or whether they exchange pallets.

A pallet control system which uses a multi-tenanted single database will make this easier to manage.

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- **Delivery Dates**

If you do raise the off docket at your pickup depot then it may be difficult to determine what the delivery date should be. This is a fair point and can be irritating to receivers if the delivery dates are continually wrong. There are some things that can be done such as trying to improve the accuracy of your delivery dates and/or editing the docket in your pallet control system once the delivery date is confirmed. This can be more work, but it would be worth the effort.

- **Total Solution**

To implement Linked docket tracking you need to have all depots participating. There would need to be good procedures and training to ensure that the process works as it should.

Is Linked Docket Tracking an option?



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Given the large numbers of pallets that many carriers lose there is a great opportunity to turn things around, but many will say that it cannot be done.

The prize is too great not to give it serious consideration and it could impact on important things such as who does what and when.

There are some carriers who manage to do the easier part of their consignments. Full truck loads from a single pickup point to a single delivery point is easily done. The rest of it is a challenge but not impossible. If you are losing pallets, then you need to change something. Linked docket tracking is an option which could work for many carriers.

There could be blue skies ahead for those that can make it work.

