

Transportation

The Role of Transport

In the humanitarian context, transport is defined as:

“ **The activities involved in moving supplies from point of origin to internal customers or beneficiaries**”.

The role of transport is to facilitate the movement of physical goods. In the humanitarian context, this might include:

- Transport from manufacturing facilities, donors, and storage or pre-positioning locations
- Delivery to regional warehouses, country level warehouses, offices and distribution points
- Carriage between warehouses, hubs and field locations

The source and destination may be in the same country, or one may be in a different country requiring international movement.

The rapid growth of technology and the changes in the delivery of humanitarian aid has done little to change the fact that relief supplies still have to be collected and delivered via some physical form of the transmission. Even though new technologies have enhanced the speed at which cargo can be transported or monitored, the basic concepts surrounding transportation have remained largely the same for many years.

Historically, the transportation of supplies has been regarded as an ancillary function of little or no central importance. More recently, efficient transportation has been recognised as an essential determinant in providing consistent, quality service to beneficiaries. A good transport system fulfils the "rights" of supply chain management. That is:

- The right good.
- Delivered to the right recipient.
- In the right quantities.
- In the right condition.
- At the right location.
- In the right time.
- For the right price.

In an ideal scenario, goods will arrive as scheduled, at the right price, in maximised loads with no breakages or pilferage.

Summarising this thinking into a series of actionable steps, and successfully implementing those steps, will ensure timely and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. A good transport system complements an efficient distribution system.

Common Terms in Cargo Transport

Shipper

The person or legal entity that is sending the goods from point of origin. The shipper does not have to be the owner of the cargo. The shipper can also be referred to as the sender.

Carrier	The person or legal entity that either owns the vehicle or vessel upon which cargo is transported - or "carried" - or has legal responsibility for physical stewardship of the cargo between two points.
Receiver	The person or legal entity that is duly authorised to receive cargo on the receiving end. Receivers are also sometimes called "consignees," however the term consignee has specific legal meaning in customs proceedings, while a receiver is more generic could take possession of cargo through a variety of means, domestic or international.
Agent	A person or legal entity who is legally and contractually designated to act on behalf of a shipper, carrier or receiver. Agents can act in a variety of functions, from handling goods to processing documentation.
Service Provider	Any contracted third-party entity that offers a service, usually on a for profit basis. A service provider may be involved in a variety of activities, including being an acting agent or a contracted carrier.
"Take Possession"	When physical goods are transmitted into the direct care and stewardship of one party, be it a transporter, a warehouse, or customs, that party is said to have "taken possession" of the cargo. Taking possession does not mean the party holding the cargo then owns the cargo, they are only physically holding it for their part of the transport process.
Intermodal	Any form of transport that changes between two or more modes of transport. Intermodal transport can be facilitated through the use of containerised shipment, however cargo can also be transported through intermodal means simply by directly loading and offloading through a variety of means.
Material Handling Equipment (MHE)	MHE is any form of mechanical equipment used to facilitate the loading and offloading of cargo, or the movement of cargo around an open space such as a port or a warehouse. MHE includes forklifts, cranes, pallet jacks, and more.
Incoterms	Incoterms - "International commercial terms" - are mutually agreed upon international shipping terms that designate responsibilities, risks and limitations of shippers, carriers and receivers. Incoterms generally are only applicable and enforceable for international shipments.