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IRU LOADING BAY GUIDELINES

Unanimously adopted by the IRU Goods Transport Council (CTM) meeting, held in Geneva on 11 April 2013

Every stakeholder in the supply chain relies on efficient loading ramp operations. However, “just-in-time” transport and/or “just-in-sequence” delivery becomes very difficult under current loading bay operations. In fact, ramp waiting times often take several hours and are hardly able to be calculated in advance anymore.

It is quite often the case that the driver is firmly “engaged” by the ramp personnel in loading/unloading or other ancillary activities, which leads to conflicts with drivers’ specified driving and rest time periods. However, “scarce resource driver working time” makes a clear differentiation necessary between the driving task and the provision of logistical services.

In response to this situation, the IRU Goods Transport Council (CTM) adopted industry guidelines to remedy the current inefficiencies during loading bay operations. These guidelines provide useful recommendations to help improve these unacceptable working conditions for drivers, while increasing efficiency at loading bays.

IRU Loading Bay Guidelines are based on three key recommendations:

- 1. A voluntary code of conduct, with best behavioural practices for drivers and ramp personnel. These best behavioural practices shall be attached to transport contracts, where appropriate (Annexe 1);**
- 2. The integration of specific clauses in transport contracts, clarifying each party’s responsibilities in loading and unloading, as well as the monitoring of waiting times (Annexe 2); and**
- 3. The use of IT applications enabling transport operators, where feasible, to book loading and unloading slots and providing visibility for shippers and carriers on availability of loading bays, labour and warehouse schedules (Annexe 3).**

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Voluntary Code of Conduct
Behavioural recommendations for the fair treatment of
those involved in points of loading and unloading (ramps)

Efficient logistics depends on smooth operations at supply chain interfaces - especially when dealing with customers. Loading ramps as the central interface of the ordering party, transportation providers, drivers and recipients of goods, increasingly lead to logistical bottlenecks in the planned trucking schedule. It becomes more difficult to reliably guarantee specific deadlines in accordance with the law to ensure driving and working hours for the transport logistics operators and drivers. Ramp waiting times often take several hours and are hardly able to be calculated in advance anymore. It is often the case that the driver is firmly “engaged” by ramp personnel in loading or unloading or other ancillary activities (such as repacking or packing, the disposal of packaging or the transport and disposal of expired foods, for example) which lead to conflicts with his specified driving and rest time periods. However, “scarce resource driver working time” now makes a clear differentiation necessary between the driving task and providing logistical value-added services.

Furthermore, the social environment is cause for criticism. Sanitation and adequate waiting rooms for drivers at loading and unloading sites can often leave much to be desired, as does the personal relationship between ramp personnel and drivers. In all, it must be taken into account that the employers of the persons concerned, for example, the recipients of goods and the transportation logistics companies, do not usually have a direct contractual relationship with each other. Nevertheless, it should be possible to obtain effective improvements to the unofficial channels, regardless of basic infrastructural changes to the ramps and improvements in organisation, management and administration.

The present behavioural recommendations should contribute to fair treatment in order to make tasks at the ramp more efficient and more socially acceptable in the interests of all involved. For dispatch, work conditions and conditions of entry, as well as appearance / behaviour, best practice recommendations are provided that are appropriate to the respective situations.

Applicable areas of behavioural recommendations

The following principle applies: Drivers should be able to feel respected at loading and unloading sites. Conversely, drivers should adapt to the customs at loading and unloading sites and also treat ramp personnel with respect.

A. Dispatch procedures:

Arrival	
Requirements of loading / unloading sites	<i>Permitted arrival times - if agreed - should be respected. In case of delay, timely preliminary information should be provided.</i>
Driver requirements	<i>Permitted arrival times - if agreed - should be respected. In case of delay or early deliveries, timely preliminary information should be provided.</i>

Vehicle registration / notification	
Loading / unloading site requirements	<i>Registration should be done without delay. If possible, data should be sent in advance.</i>
Driver requirements	<i>The necessary vehicle and cargo information should be ready.</i>
Loading points allocation (gate, storage area)	
Loading / unloading site requirements	<i>Information on further details for loading and unloading sites are to be provided to the driver in a clear and timely manner.</i>
Registration / log-in at the loading station	
Loading / unloading site requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Signalling switches / terminals should be covered / closed, so the driver does not have to stand outside.</i> • <i>Queues should be avoided.</i> • <i>Information on the status of dispatches should be given in a proactive manner and should not require the driver to access this information automatically. If possible, information displayed on panels that require constant monitoring by the driver should be abandoned.</i> • <i>The driver's "remaining work time" should be considered: The driver or the dispatcher should be informed by ramp personnel of the expected duration of the waiting time so that those times do not need to be allocated as work time from a legal perspective.</i> • <i>Queuing at the ramp is to be avoided by the driver to limit driving time losses. In this case, the digital tachograph switches to driving time at the start of each driving task and to rest time registration at each stop. Depending on the predominant driving or waiting time at a certain point, valuable driving or rest time is used. The driver could, however, set "driving breaks" or "rest times" on the digital tachograph. These times may not even be legally recognised as valid driving or rest times as, for example, when a partial driving break is less than 15 minutes. This is because after a driving period of four and a half hours a driver shall have taken a driving break totalling 45 minutes. This break may be divided into two sub-times of 15 and 30 minutes. If the minimum periods are not reached, then there is no valid driving break.</i> • <i>Should waiting times arise, then the driver should be granted a partial driving break, if necessary (see above). Adequate parking / rest areas / social services should be available.</i> • <i>Subsequent time restrictions for drivers should be incorporated into the control / ramp management process based on social rules for drivers.</i> • <i>Ramps should be sized / positioned as such that, for example, the opening of truck doors without complicated and time-consuming manoeuvring is possible; sloping ramps should be able to be approached directly.</i>
Driver requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Drivers should immediately respond to information received.</i> • <i>Ramp personnel should be informed in a timely manner of the status of the remaining work time and any necessary breaks.</i> • <i>If excess work time is possible due to longer waiting times, then ramp personnel should be informed immediately.</i>

Loading / unloading procedures	
Loading / unloading site requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The involvement of the driver is subject to prior contractual agreement by the carrier / operator with the sender. In the event of such an agreement, the involvement of the driver is bound to the instructions regarding the industrial truck's location and operation. • Loading devices / industrial trucks are in good working order and are provided in sufficient numbers. • During receipt of goods / loading times, sufficient qualified personnel should be made available. • Ramps should not be blocked with uncollected / unstored goods.
Driver requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If agreed, sufficient tools should be made available. • There should be proper care and handling of loading devices / industrial trucks. The devices should be handed over at a certain point or be parked according to the instructions of the loading personnel after their use.
Inventory control (sampling procedure, if necessary)	
Loading / unloading site requirements	The inventory control should take place based on pre-determined procedures - standardised as far as possible - e.g. frozen foods.
Pallet exchange	
Loading / unloading site requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parties should agree on a fair process for pallet exchange. • The required loading equipment should be made available in the quantity and quality required provided that pallet exchange is agreed upon. • The return of loading equipment should be kept separate if possible, if the procedures so permit.
Driver requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parties should agree on fair treatment regarding pallets. • The required loading equipment should be available in the required quantity and quality provided that pallet exchange is agreed upon.
Document handling and document creation	
Loading / unloading site requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document creation should be initiated in parallel with loading and unloading in order to avoid unnecessary delays. • Incorrect amounts, differences in pallet exchange, etc., should be countersigned / acknowledged.
Checking out / exit	
Loading / unloading site requirements	The disclosure of required information / data should take place in a timely manner in order to avoid waiting times.

B. work conditions and conditions of entry at the loading / unloading site

Creating a socially just environment / washrooms and toilets	
Loading / unloading site requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers should be provided with access to washrooms and toilets at all times - even outside regular operating times. • The needs of female drivers should be taken into consideration (separate washrooms). • Washrooms and toilets should be tidy.
Driver requirements	Washrooms and toilets should be left tidy after use.
Waiting room options	
Loading / unloading site requirements	Drivers should have access to lounges / rest rooms / cafeterias during waiting times.
Driver requirements	Drivers should adapt to the respective customs on the plant grounds and comply with regulations.
Contact person	
Loading / unloading site requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A competent contact person should be available or reachable at all times during operating / unloading times. • A competent contact person outside regular loading / unloading times is also desirable. At least one telephone contact should be possible.
Driver requirements	Consultations should be held with the representative if clarification in securing cargo or in handling is required.

C. Appearance / behaviour requirements

Loading / unloading site requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly and cooperative behaviour. • No discrimination. • Clear behaviour when dealing with one another should be established and communicated. • Authority and contact persons should be established and communicated.
Driver requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly and cooperative behaviour. • No discrimination. • Clean and task-appropriate clothing. • Engaging and friendly demeanour. • Rules of behaviour should be observed when dealing with one another. • The customer's authority and contact persons are important; conflicts should preferably not be settled on an operational level.

D. General

The establishment of a reporting system with a regular exchange of experiences could offer practical suggestions for improving processes. Improvements could also be documented and forwarded within the scope of a reporting system. A dispute resolution service could eliminate difficulties or conflicts in partnership with those affected.

Specific Clauses in Transport Contracts

The contract between the transport operator and the shipper should clearly define:

- the responsibility for the loading and unload the vehicle;
- a reference to the allocated loading and unloading time;
- an agreement on the recording of additional waiting time;
- the amount of reimbursement for additional waiting time; and
- clarification regarding obligations in case of subcontracting.

Note: As a limitation to the above, it should however be mentioned that the specific clauses in the transport contract might not help to improve the loading bay operation for own account transport as they work on a different contractual basis.

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IT Applications

Where appropriate and feasible, transport operators should ask for an effective implementation of IT applications such as slot booking systems.

Note: Indeed, many large companies such as Shell, BASF and Goodyear have implemented loading bay slot booking systems with the aim of providing visibility for shippers and carriers on availability of dock, labour and warehouse schedules. With these systems loading dock slots can be booked via the internet or by mobile phone and they provide pro-active alerts to both shippers and carriers when new appointments, modifications of appointments or cancellations are entered in the system.

According to empirical and scientific analysis by several universities, the waiting time at loading ramps can be considerably reduced. However, several surveys also highlight that this time slot management is not undisputed as it is often not clear what will happen if a time slot cannot be held.

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