



Reefer Hauling
Trucking 101

2021

LUIS LOPEZ

Episode 28 www.thefreightguru.io



What is Reefer Hauling?

This is a “slang” term in the trucking industry specifically in the “Over the Road” or OTR World for Refrigerated Cargo Transport. A Reefer Truck is pulling a refrigerated trailer with a semi trailer that is refrigerated. This type of trailer is meant to haul perishable goods like frozen foods, flowers and ice cream to name a few.



Higher Paying Loads

Reefer loads pay better than dry van freight. Goods transported this way often require sensitive temperature control. Most food and beverage companies ship their goods in a refrigerated trailer kept at 32-36°F, like your fridge at home. Most frozen trucks operate at -10°F. Some chemicals and pharmaceutical products require even colder temperatures. The COVID-19 vaccine from Pfizer-BioNtech, for example, requires shipment at -80°C to -60°C (-112°F to -76°F).

In colder weather, reefer trailers also operate as heaters to maintain warmer cargo temperatures during transit. This prevents freezing or other temperature damage for some foods, alcohol, chemicals, and sensitive electronics. Reefer transport is more complex to operate because the loads are sensitive to temperature changes and because it takes specialized equipment to maintain the right temperature.

The types of cargo that require refrigeration are often more valuable than dry freight, impacting the cargo rates shippers are prepared to pay.



24-7 Pick up and Delivery

Easier pickup and delivery

Grocery chains, distribution centers, and food processing facilities typically have well-organized and well-run loading docks that handle thousands of pounds of cargo daily. The result is easy, stress-free loading and unloading.

Fewer deadhead miles

There are two reasons reefer trucks run fewer deadhead miles.

1. Because there are so many reefer freight loads available, drivers have fewer gaps between loads. More loads mean more load density, so you don't have to drive far for your next pick-up.
2. Because reefer units don't *have* to be reefer units. If you find that refrigerated products are going one way and dry products are going back the other, you can easily turn off the generator and run the trailer dry on the return



The Con of Reefer Cargo

The complexity that makes hauling reefer loads more lucrative also adds challenges to the role. Before you go out on the road with a reefer, you should know the potential downsides:

Pre-cooling requirements and long wait times

Picking up temperature-controlled freight takes longer for a variety of reasons. First, you need to make sure your trailer is at the right temperature before the dock manager at your pickup can load their cargo. They will take the temperature, too. If your yard is close to the pick-up location and you forgot to pre-cool the unit, you'll be in for a long wait. Groceries often ship on smaller skids or crates and take longer to load as a result. If it's dangerous (chemicals) or fragile (cases of beer or eggs), it will (and should) take longer to load.



Extra Vehicle Maintenance

You're adding a new layer of mechanical complexity to your rig when you add a refrigeration unit. Making sure the cooling unit is in good operating condition, ensuring the oil, Freon, and other fluids are at the right level, even inspecting all the hoses, takes more time and effort. If you don't maintain the heating and cooling system, you could lose an entire load. Reefer cargo is often messier than dry cargo, so you'll get well acquainted with the hose and inside of your trailer if you choose these loads.

You can pay for trailer cleaning, but that's another cost out of your pocket. In some cases, the shipper will reimburse you, so make sure you keep the cleaning receipts.

Keep the receipt if you pay a lumper too. A lumper is a third-party operator who you pay to unload or load your trailer. You can often negotiate these ahead of time. But if you forget to factor that into your quote, or worse, forget the receipt, you'll be left holding the bag.

Spoilage Alert



What's that smell?!" A spoiled load is more than just a pain in the nose for a reefer driver. Cargo that has left the required temperature window because of a breakdown can cost a fortune. Grocery stores will reject freight that has spoiled or is outside the required temperature zone. Sometimes, a business will decline a shipment because the date codes on the products don't fall within their window. Prevent that from happening by inspecting your cargo at both ends of the journey.

Additional insurance is Required



The good news is, you can buy breakdown coverage. Reefer breakdown insurance is a must-have, but it can be expensive. You'll also need to keep meticulous maintenance logs to ensure the coverage provider pays up when you need it.



Daily Best Practices for Reefer Work

1. Pre-cool your trailer. Further to the point above, make sure you set your trailer and get it up to operating temperature before you arrive at the pick-up.
2. Identify temperature requirements. Find out ahead of time what the temperature requirements for your load will be. Is it just refrigerated or completely frozen? Do you need to maintain heat? What is the acceptable range? Program your unit ahead of time.
3. Load and unload reefer freight quickly.

This one is a paradox. You have to manage the conflicting needs of fragile cargo and safety with speed and efficiency. The longer your trailer doors are open, the harder it is to maintain temperature. Make sure the dock manager is ready to load your cargo *before* you open the doors and back up to the dock.

4. Monitor shipments closely. Fit your unit with monitoring systems and temperature gauges. You should always know what the temperature is inside your trailer. Redundant monitors add a layer of security and safety. Use the climate monitoring tools before pickup and during shipment to make sure your trailer is always in the right zone.



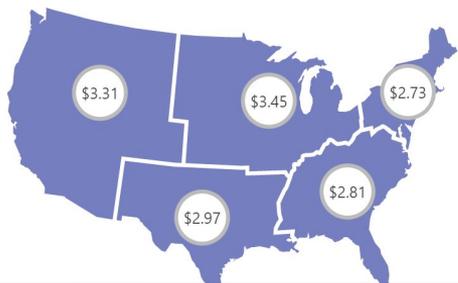
Hot Zones as of August 2021 for Reefer

DAT Trendlines™

DAT TRENDLINES VAN FLATBED REEFER

powered by DAT iQ

National Reefer Rates



Check the [DAT Freight Talk blog](#) for regular updates on market conditions, regulations and industry trends.



The chart above depicts national average line haul rates and fuel surcharges for vans in the past 13 months, derived from DAT RateView.

About Market Rates

Rates are market averages derived from DAT RateView™, an innovative service that provides real-time reports on prevailing spot market and contract rates, as well as historical rate and capacity trends. RateView's comprehensive database is comprised of more than \$110 billion in freight bills in over 68,000 lanes.

National Average Rates



National Fuel Prices



Percent Change: +0.6%

Fuel Price: \$3.34 /gallon

Internet Personality: **Freight Guru**

Learn How To Succeed in Logistics

Brought to you by The Freight Guru

Removing the resistance of a sale from users has proven to be extremely successful especially among B2B markets.

Instead we will teach how to succeed in logistics at no cost providing free assets and more value to the brand.

New Positioning:

The Freight Guru is a successful entrepreneur from South Florida that shares techniques of how to be successful in the logistics industry.

Audience: Brokers, millennials, freight forwarders, shippers, truck owners, and supply chain professionals.

