



Why choose Intermodal transportation?

Intermodal transportation is the movement of goods in one and the same loading unit or road vehicle, using successively two or more modes of transport without handling the goods themselves in changing modes (ECMT/UN Definition).

How does it work

Combined transport techniques include following modes:

- Road-rail
- Rail-maritime
- Rail-waterway
- Rail-air

An example for intermodal transportation would be the transport by ship to a port, from which the containers are either loaded directly on the wagons or are transported by truck to the rail terminal. The containers are transported to the nearest hub by rail and are then transported to the final destination. In general, the major part of the European journey is by rail, inland waterways or by sea and any initial and/or final legs are carried out by trucks.

More details

The combined transport segment is the segment which is growing most rapidly compared to the other freight businesses. Between 1988 and 2010 international unaccompanied combined transport (in tonnes) increased by 215% and between 2002 and 2015 it is expected to grow by 135%.

The intermodal transport is a concentrated business which is mainly carried out on a few selected corridors. 10% of all services cover 80% of the total transported volume and 16 percent of the services cover 90% of the total volume.

The Railway operators offer two types of intermodal transport: Accompanied transport and unaccompanied transport. The difference is that with accompanied transports is the whole truck loaded on the railway wagon meanwhile the unaccompanied transports loose units (e.g. container or semi-trailer).

Accompanied transport is also known as "rolling road" and is used in countries such as Switzerland and Austria mainly to cross the Alps. In 2010, unaccompanied accounted for 92.5% of the overall volume for combined transport in terms of tonnes.