

LOAD DETAILS CHEAT SHEET

2026 Expanded Edition | Dispatcher 101 & Freight Broker 101 Training for Beginners

A practical broker-call checklist for 53-foot dry vans, 53-foot reefers, and 48-/53-foot flatbeds. Use it before accepting a load, then verify all terms on the written rate confirmation.

Important: This is a training aid, not a substitute for carrier safety procedures, applicable regulations, insurance terms, or the executed rate confirmation.

1 | UNIVERSAL BROKER QUESTIONS

Ask these for EVERY load, regardless of trailer type. The 2020 original covered dates, stops, rate, commodity, weight, loaded miles, and special instructions; this version expands those essentials.

Load identity & appointment details

☐ What is the load ID, broker company name, contact name, callback number, and email?

☐ What are the exact pickup and delivery facility names, street addresses, dates, local times, and time zones?

☐ Are appointments firm, flexible, or FCFS (first come, first served)? What are receiving hours and cutoff times?

☐ How many pickups, deliveries, and intermediate stops? Are extra stops included in the quoted rate?

☐ Is the load live-load/live-unload, drop-and-hook, preloaded, or trailer-pool? Is a trailer interchange required?

☐ What is the commodity, packaging, piece/pallet count, total weight, and any special handling?

☐ What are the loaded miles and actual routing constraints? Any tolls, restricted roads, or required routes?

Money & payment

☐ What is the all-in linehaul rate? Is fuel surcharge included or separately itemized? Is the rate negotiable?

☐ What are the detention free-time rules, hourly rates, and proof requirements? What is layover pay?

☐ What are the stop-off, TONU (truck ordered not used), cancellation, lumper, unloading, and other accessorial terms?

☐ Who pays lumper fees, tolls, permits, escorts, tarping, or special services, and how are reimbursements approved?

☐ What is the payment term? Is quick pay offered, and what is its fee? Are there deductions or penalties?

☐ When will the signed rate confirmation be sent, and what documents are needed for payment?

Carrier fit, risk & communication

☐ Is the broker authorized, and does the carrier meet the broker’s insurance, safety, and onboarding requirements?

☐ Is the freight hazmat, high value, bonded, food-grade, or otherwise restricted? Any seal or security requirements?

☐ Are tracking apps, ELD visibility, check calls, photos, or real-time location sharing required?

☐ Who handles delays, missed appointments, claims, and after-hours issues? Obtain the escalation number.

☐ Are there driver-assist, pallet jack, liftgate, tailgating, or other services beyond standard transportation?

☐ Can you send the rate confirmation and special instructions before dispatch? Do not rely on a verbal quote alone.

2 | 53-FOOT DRY VAN



Use for enclosed, non-temperature-controlled freight. Confirm the specific trailer and loading requirements before quoting.

Dry van questions to add

☐ Is the load palletized, floor-loaded, loose cartons, rolls, or machinery? How is it loaded and unloaded?

☐ How many pallets and what are the largest item dimensions? Will the load fit the available interior space and door opening?

☐ Is it driver no-touch, driver-assist, or driver unload? Are pallet exchanges or load bars required?

☐ Are straps, load locks, edge protectors, dunnage, or special bracing required? Who supplies them?

☐ Is the load sealed? Who applies the seal, and how must seal numbers be recorded?

☐ Are there trailer-age, cleanliness, odor-free, food-grade, swing-door, air-ride, or other trailer requirements?

☐ Is the commodity fragile, moisture-sensitive, high-value, or subject to special cargo insurance limits?

☐ Is the posted weight gross cargo weight, and can the shipper distribute the freight for legal axle weights?

Watch-outs

Heavy loads with unknown pallet distribution; surprise driver unload; “no-touch” contradicted by receiver requirements; trailer specification not disclosed; late appointment with unrealistic transit time.

3 | 53-FOOT REEFER



Reefer questions to add

☐ What is the exact setpoint in °F or °C? Is it a continuous-run or start/stop requirement?

☐ Must the trailer be precooled? To what temperature, by what time, and must a pre-cool reading be documented?

☐ What is the required product temperature at loading? Who checks and records it?

☐ Is this frozen, chilled, or temperature-protected freight? What is the permitted temperature range and any alarm threshold?

☐ Is a temperature recorder, reefer download, telematics access, or temperature log required?

☐ Is the freight produce? If so, are there pulp-temperature, ventilation, humidity, or ethylene-separation instructions?

☐ Are mixed commodities allowed? Are there incompatible temperatures or odor-sensitive items?

☐ Is the unit fuel level, maintenance status, or run-hour minimum specified? Any trailer age or washout requirements?

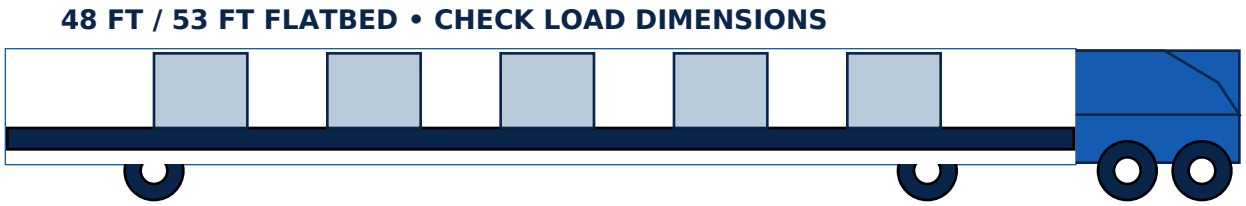
☐ Who is responsible if product is loaded outside the required temperature? What must the driver note on the BOL?

☐ Are there extra reefer fuel, washout, or long-delay charges, and are they included in the quoted rate?

Watch-outs

No written setpoint; ambiguous “keep cold” instructions; product loaded warm; continuous-run requirement discovered after booking; mixed-temperature freight; no clear process for recording temperature exceptions.

4 | 48-/53-FOOT FLATBED



Flatbed questions to add

☐ What are the exact load length, width, height, and total weight, including packaging or dunnage?

☐ How many pieces? What are the dimensions and weight of the heaviest single piece? Where is the center of gravity?

☐ Is it legal-dimension freight on the planned trailer and route, or oversize/overweight? Who arranges and pays for permits and escorts?

☐ What securement is required: straps, chains, binders, edge protection, coil racks, pipe stakes, dunnage, or blocking?

☐ Is tarping required: full, partial, smoke tarp, or no tarp? Who supplies tarps, and what is the tarp pay?

☐ How is the freight loaded and unloaded: crane, forklift, side-load, or overhead? Are loading/unloading appointments required?

☐ Are there loading-site PPE rules, fall-protection procedures, or restrictions on driver participation?

☐ Are there sharp edges, coils, steel, lumber, machinery, or other commodity-specific securement hazards?

☐ Can the cargo be distributed within axle limits? Are axle/bridge limits and route restrictions already checked?

☐ Will a 48-foot flatbed be accepted, or is a full 53-foot deck specifically required?

Watch-outs

“Standard flatbed” with undisclosed overhang; unknown single-piece weights; tarping not included in pay; missing loading equipment; permit responsibility unclear. Securement must meet applicable cargo-specific requirements.

5 | QUICK RATE & MILEAGE CHECK

Measure	Formula / example
Loaded RPM	All-in load rate ÷ loaded miles
All-miles RPM	All-in load rate ÷ (deadhead + loaded miles)
Example	$2,400 ÷ 800 loaded mi = $3.00 loaded RPM
Example incl. deadhead	$2,400 ÷ (100 + 800) mi = $2.67 all-miles RPM
Trip margin estimate	Revenue − fuel − tolls − other trip costs − allocated operating costs

Compare the offer against the carrier’s own cost per mile, empty miles, expected wait time, route, and next-load prospects. RPM alone does not establish profitability.

6 | BROKER CALL SCRIPT

“Hello, this is [name] with [dispatch service / carrier]. I’m calling about load [ID] from [origin] to [destination] for a [53-foot dry van / 53-foot reefer / 48- or 53-foot flatbed]. Is it still available?”

“Can you confirm pickup and delivery appointments, commodity, weight, stops, loaded miles, loading method, and special requirements? What is your best all-in rate, and what are the detention, layover, and TONU terms?”

“For this equipment, I also need to confirm [temperature and run mode / loading and securement / tarping and dimensions]. Is there any tracking, driver assist, or special paperwork?”

“If we agree at $[rate], please email the rate confirmation with the complete addresses, appointments, special instructions, and accessorial terms. I’ll review it with the carrier before acceptance.”

7 | LOAD BOOKING WORKSHEET

Load ID / date: _____

Broker / MC / contact: _____

Carrier / truck / trailer: _____

Equipment / trailer length: _____

Pickup address / appointment / TZ: _____

Delivery address / appointment / TZ: _____

Stops / loading type: _____

Commodity / pieces / pallets: _____

Weight / dimensions: _____

Loaded miles / deadhead miles: _____

All-in rate / fuel breakdown: _____

Loaded RPM / all-miles RPM: _____

Detention / layover / TONU: _____

Lumper / stop pay / tarp pay: _____

Temperature / run mode (reefer): _____

Securement / tarp / permits (flatbed): _____

Tracking / seal / special instructions: _____

Rate confirmation received / reviewed: _____

Dispatcher / driver approval: _____

8 | FINAL GO / NO-GO CHECK

☐ Carrier is qualified and trailer matches the posted load.

☐ Broker identity and payment requirements have been checked through trusted channels.

☐ Pickup and delivery schedules are realistic for hours of service.

☐ Equipment-specific temperature, dimensions, securement, and special requirements are clear.

☐ All-in rate, accessorials, and responsibility for extra charges are documented.

☐ Written rate confirmation matches the agreement; carrier authorizes booking.

Training note: Verify broker authority and contact information independently using official FMCSA resources. Do not treat a load-board listing alone as proof of broker identity.