

A photograph of several semi-trucks parked in a lot, with a blue tint overlaying the image. The trucks are arranged in a row, with the front of the nearest truck on the right side of the frame.

Transportation Document Management: The Complete Guide

How trucking and logistics companies eliminate paperwork bottlenecks, protect cash flow, and keep drivers moving

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Introduction

Transportation companies run on documents. Bills of lading, proof of delivery, driver logs, fuel receipts, and freight invoices move through your business every single day, often on paper, often out of your control until a driver gets back to the yard. That delay creates real problems: slower billing, delayed driver pay, and cash flow that's always a step behind the work your trucks already did. This guide covers what document management actually looks like for transportation and logistics companies, and what to consider if you're ready to fix it.



The Document Challenge in Transportation and Logistics

Unlike a typical office environment, transportation document management has to account for documents that originate in the field, often hundreds of miles from headquarters, in the hands of drivers who have a job to do that isn't paperwork. Bills of lading get signed at a dock, proof of delivery gets captured at a customer site, and none of it reaches your billing team until the truck is back or someone remembers to fax it in. That gap between when a document is created and when your office can act on it is where most of the cost lives.



The Core Documents Every Trucking Company Manages

Every load generates a paper trail: bills of lading, proof of delivery, driver logs and hours of service records, fuel and toll receipts, freight invoices, and often accessorial charge documentation. Each of these documents needs to be captured, matched to the right load, and routed to the right department, whether that's billing, payroll, or compliance. Missing or delayed documents don't just slow down back office work, they directly delay invoicing and driver pay.



What Manual Document Handling Really Costs

When documents travel with a truck instead of a data connection, billing waits. Every day a proof of delivery sits in a driver's cab instead of your system is a day your invoice doesn't go out, and a day further from getting paid. Add in the labor cost of manually entering freight invoice data, matching documents to loads, and chasing down missing paperwork, and the true cost of manual handling is almost always higher than companies expect. Billing cycle delays, driver pay disputes, and lost or damaged paper documents all add up.



Mobile Capture: Getting Documents Off the Truck and Into Your System

Mobile capture allows drivers to photograph a bill of lading, proof of delivery, or receipt directly from their phone or tablet, with that document automatically classified, matched to the correct load, and routed into your system in real time. This closes the gap between when a document is created in the field and when your office can act on it, often cutting billing cycles from days to hours.





Integrating with Your TMS and Accounting Systems

A document management system that doesn't talk to your TMS just creates another silo. Look for direct integrations with the transportation management and accounting systems you already run, so a captured document automatically attaches to the right load, invoice, or driver record without someone manually connecting the dots.

Getting Started: A Practical Implementation Path

Start by identifying your highest volume, highest friction document type, often proof of delivery or freight invoices, and pilot mobile capture and automated routing there first. Involve drivers early, since their adoption determines whether documents actually make it into the system in real time. From there, expand to additional document types and departments as your team gets comfortable with the new workflow.



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