

## Urban Freight

### Definitions

Urban freight transport comprises the delivery and collection of goods in towns and cities. It involves the transportation, handling and storage of goods, as well as home delivery services.

### Context and Policies

Although freight transport plays a central role in the business and life of cities, in many cases commercial traffic has not been given the attention it deserves in urban mobility planning. Freight systems distribute food, water, energy, information (mail, newspapers, etc.), clothing, and other essentials to individual households and businesses. They also handle the collection and removal of trash and waste.

These are complex and costly processes, as freight must be delivered (or picked up) in small units and everybody must be served. For cities to exist at all, these services must be provided. For cities to prosper, they must be provided effectively.

### Issues

There is a popular perception that goods vehicles are detrimental to the urban environment, contributing significantly to the problems of congestion, pollution, safety and noise. It is not surprising, therefore, that conflicts can arise between commercial interests and environmentalists.

Goods vehicle operators and drivers face a range of difficulties when carrying out freight operations in urban areas. These include:

- Traffic flow/congestion issues caused by traffic levels, traffic incidents, inadequate road infrastructure, and poor driver behaviour;
- Transport policy-related problems including vehicle access restrictions based on time and/or size/weight of vehicle, bus and cycle lanes, etc.;
- Parking and loading/unloading problems including regulations, fines and lack of space; and
- Customer/receiver-related problems including queuing to make deliveries and collections, difficulty in finding the receiver, collection and delivery times.

### Actions

Urban freight transport management uses the following types of strategies to increase the efficiency of freight and commercial transport:

- Using restricted and/or variable delivery times to reduce congestion (especially in city centres);
- Using small and medium size vehicles with modern emission controls and/or human powered transport for local distribution;
- Improved scheduling and routing to reduce freight vehicle mileage and increase load factors, through increased computerisation and coordination;



Commercial Deliveries

### Resources

#### Documents

- **City Logistics: Changing how we supply**, 2004, L. N. Ramokgopa, 23rd Annual Southern African Transport Conference (South Africa)
- **Good Practice Guide on Urban Freight Transport**, 2007, BESTUFS consortium (EU)
- **Inner Urban Freight Transport and City Logistics**, 2003, Ulrich Schäffeler and Jost Wichser, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, PORTAL (EU)
- **Urban Freight Transport and Logistics: An overview of the European research and policy**, 2006, Damian Stantchev and Tony Whiteing, University of Leeds, DG Energy and Transport (EU)
- **Urban freight transport policy and planning**, 1999, Johan Visser, Arjan van Binsbergen and Toshinori Nemoto, First International Symposium on City Logistics, Cairns (Australia)

#### Presentations

- **Improving attractiveness of cities with city freight solutions**, 2006, Jarl Schoemaker, BESTUFS, Rijswijk (The Netherlands)
- **Planning for Urban Freight Movement**, 2003, Arun Chatterjee, University of Tennessee (USA)

#### Recommended Links

- **BESTUFS (Best Urban Freight Solutions)** (EU)
- **SMARTFREIGHT** (EU)

- Organising delivery systems such that fewer vehicle trips are needed to distribute goods;
- Implementing fleet management programmes that reduce vehicle mileage, use optimal sized vehicles for each trip, and ensure that fleet vehicles are properly maintained; and
- Improving vehicle operator training to encourage more efficient driving.

### For further information

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