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AEROSPACE RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

SAE ARP4853

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SPECIFICATION FOR TOWBARLESS TOW VEHICLES

FOREWORD

This SAE Aerospace Recommended Practice (ARP) describes the dimensions, design, layout, performance, and capability of a towbarless tow vehicle (TLTV).

This tow vehicle will basically be used for aircraft listed in 1.4.

Overall design of the unit to allow operations under climatic conditions as stated under 5.1 and safe operations during day and night conditions on airport aprons, runways, taxiways, and in hangars.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS.....	2
2. APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS.....	4
3. DIMENSIONS.....	5
4. PERFORMANCE.....	5
5. DESIGN DETAILS.....	6
6. OPTIONS.....	13
7. SAFETY.....	14
8. ENVIRONMENTAL.....	15
9. DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION.....	15
10. SPECIAL TOOLS OR JIGS.....	16
11. MAINTENANCE AND MAINTAINABILITY.....	16
12. DOCUMENTATION.....	16

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SAE ARP4853**1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:**

The tow vehicle should be designed for towbarless movement of aircraft on the ground.

The design will ensure that the unit will safely secure the aircraft nose landing gear within the coupling system for any operational mode.

The purpose of this towing procedure is to achieve a safer and faster operation than is possible with conventional towing equipment.

1.1 One-Man Operation:

A one-man operation is required with all functions to be performed by the driver. Good visibility is required for controlled and safe operations, during day and night conditions.

1.2 Under-Belly Operation:

The coupling of the nose landing gear by the towbarless tow vehicle (TLTV) must be possible in all extensions of the nose strut of the following aircraft:

- a. B-777
- b. B-747
- c. B-767
- d. A-300
- e. A-310
- f. A-330
- g. A-340
- h. DC-10
- i. MD-11
- j. L-1011

1.3 The TLTV has to be designed to carry out the following tasks:

- 1.3.1 Push-Back:** Push-back shall be defined as the moving of a loaded airplane in a backward direction from a parking position to the taxiway. Movement typically includes push back with a turn, stop, and short tow forward to align the airplane. Aircraft engines may or may not be running.
- 1.3.2 Maintenance Towing:** Maintenance towing shall be defined as the movement of an airplane for maintenance/remote parking purposes (i.e., from the gate to a maintenance hangar or vice versa). Airplane is typically unloaded.
- 1.3.3 Dispatch Towing (or Operational Towing):** Dispatch towing shall be defined as the towing of a loaded (cargo and/or passenger) revenue airplane from the terminal gate area/remote parking to a location near the runway. This type of towing can involve relatively high speeds and long distances with several starts, stops, and turns.

SAE ARP4853**1.4 Aircraft Nose Gear Load:**

The TLTV should be designed for:

a. TLTV CAT I:

A/C with a maximum nose gear ground reaction up to 24 tons metric (52 900 lb) (static)

Dynamic loads must be calculated by the tow vehicle manufacturer.

B-727/737/757/767

A-300/310/319/320/321

MD-80/90

F-100

(1) OPTION A:

Light version for A/C with a nose gear ground reaction up to 19 tons metric (41 900 lb) (static)

Dynamic loads must be calculated by the tow vehicle manufacturer.

B-727/737/757

A-310/319/320/321

MD-80/90

F-100

(2) OPTION B:

Reinforced version for A/C with a nose gear ground reaction up to 36 tons metric (79 400 lb) (static)

Dynamic loads must be calculated by the tractor manufacturer.

B-727/737/757/767/777

A-300/310/319/320/321/330/340

DC-8/DC-10/MD-11/80/90

F-100

L-1011

SAE ARP4853

1.4 (Continued):

b. TLTV CAT II:

A/C with a nose gear ground reaction up to 45 tons metric (99 200 lb) (static)

Dynamic loads must be calculated by the tow vehicle manufacturer.

B-767/747/777

A-300/310/330/340

DC-10/MD-11

L-1011

2. APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS:

The following publications form a part of this specification to the extent specified herein. The latest issue of SAE publications shall apply. The applicable issue of other publications shall be the issue in effect on the date of the purchase order. In the event of conflict between the text of this specification and references cited herein, the text of this specification takes precedence. Nothing in this specification, however, supersedes applicable laws and regulations unless a specific exemption has been obtained. The TLTV must fully comply with the most recent issue to the following documents, standards, specifications, and practices as applicable to airport ramp operations.

2.1 SAE Publications:

Available from SAE, 400 Commonwealth Drive, Warrendale, PA 15096-0001.

ARP1247 General Requirements for Aerospace Ground Support Equipment Motorized and Nonmotorized
ARP1328 Aircraft Support Equipment Stability Analysis
ARP1330 Welding of Structures for Ground Support Equipment
AIR1375 Minimum Safety Requirements for Special Purpose Airline Ground Support Equipment
AIR1838 Pictograms for Ground Support Equipment

2.2 Applicable References:

Industry wide towbarless tow vehicle specification compiled by: Airbus, Boeing, Douglas, Fokker

Federal occupational safety and health standards (OSHA), subpart N

California occupational safety and health standards (CAL-OSHA)

CEN Regulations

EEC Machinery Directive

SAE ARP4853**2.2 (Continued):**

National traffic codes and regulations

Applicable mechanical engineering standards, recommended practices, and safety rules (including FAR, JAR, etc.)

Standards and safety rules especially applicable to electrical installations

Local Airport Regulations:

If local regulations add requirements to 2.8 to 2.10, they have to be made known to seller and adhered to.

3. DIMENSIONS:**3.1 TLTV CAT I:**

- a. Length: Maximum 8000 mm (315 in) without towing device
- b. Width: Maximum 3500 mm (138 in) without mirrors
- c. Turning Circle Radius: Maximum 9000 mm (355 in)
- d. Ground Clearance: Minimum 150 mm (6 in)
- e. Height: With cab retracted, unloaded maximum 1650 mm (65 in), if under belly operations are performed

3.2 TLTV CAT II:

- a. Length: Maximum 10 000 mm (394 in) without towing device
- b. Width: Maximum 4200 mm (166 in) without mirrors
- c. Turning Circle Radius: Maximum 11 000 mm (433 in)
- d. Ground Clearance: Minimum 150 mm (6 in)
- e. Height: With cab retracted, unloaded maximum 1650 mm (65 in), if under belly operations are performed

4. PERFORMANCE:

- 4.1 Tractive force shall be variable depending on the aircraft type according to 4.4. The tractive forces must be sufficient to move aircraft from standstill even under bad surface conditions and aircraft-engines running on idle speed.

SAE ARP4853**4.1 (Continued):**

The fore-aft load limiting device should be set as a function of the airplane to be towed. This value must not be exceeded during normal towing (acceleration/braking).

Tractive forces and braking applied to the aircraft shall be limited by a load limiting device.

To ensure that the tow vehicle does not negatively impact the certified safe life of the airplane nose landing gear, the tow vehicle must be assessed according to the requirements specified by the airframe manufacturer.

4.2 Speed:

- a. Minimum: 32 kph (20 mph) empty, without aircraft
- b. Maximum: 32 kph (20 mph) loaded, with aircraft

4.3 Acceleration:

Maximum speed shall be achieved as quickly as possible, but the acceleration forces must stay within the limits given by the A/C manufacturers so that there is no negative influence on the safe life-limits of the NLGs.

4.4 Deceleration:

Tow vehicle acceleration and deceleration forces values during towing operation shall be in accordance with aircraft manufacturers requirements (FAR, JAR, etc.). Traction force on the aircraft shall be limited by a protective device.

(Braking Ratio): Tow vehicle minimum 40% empty, without aircraft

5. DESIGN DETAILS:**5.1 Diesel Engine:**

Operation with kerosene JET A1 should be possible.

Standard system shall be designed for temperatures down to -20 °C (-4 °F). A design for temperatures between -20 °C (-4 °F) and -40 °C (-40 °F) should be an option.

The engine will conform to latest exhaust emission regulations according to the location where the vehicle will be used.

- 5.1.1 Provisions for long intervals between oil changes shall be taken; such as filters, oil quality, and constructional features.
- 5.1.2 Calculation of power output shall be based on 760 torr. (14.69 psi) 20 °C (68 °F) and 60% humidity.

SAE ARP4853

- 5.1.3 The chosen engine shall be widely in use and of proven design.
- 5.1.4 The engine will be adequately accessible for maintenance and inspection.
- 5.1.5 Engine replacement must be possible within an acceptably short time through the top or side of the chassis, using standard hoist equipment and shop means. For removal, it should only be necessary to disconnect supply and control lines, linkages, exhaust and intact piping, fuel lines and, possibly, a driveshaft.

A power converter or mechanical transmission could remain with the engine.

- 5.1.5.1 Engine shall be provided with adequate hoist provisions offering safe load bearing capability.
- 5.1.6 The unit shall be equipped with an efficient exhaust system, located to prevent entrance of exhaust gases into the cab, or discharge into a wheel casing.
- 5.1.7 The engine shall be started electrically.

5.2 Power Train:

- 5.2.1 ASR (traction control/slip positive control), or differential locks or other means to avoid decreased traction forces as well as skidding controls must be provided on each wheel.
- 5.2.2 Four- or two-wheel drive systems are applicable, but preferably four-wheel drive to prevent wheel skidding.
- 5.2.3 Power train from engine to the wheels shall be of proven type.

Gear shifting by hand shall not be required in the operational mode. In case of an automatic transmission (via a torque converter), gear change must be smooth.

- 5.2.4 It should be possible to tow the tow vehicle with a minimum speed of 5 kph (3 mph) over long distances.

5.3 Wheels, Tires, Axles:

- 5.3.1 Tire sizes and a suitable tire tread have to be chosen to suit all airport operations.

Each tire shall have, at minimal inflation pressure, a rated carrying capacity at least equal to the gross load normally imposed on it by a fully equipped and ballasted tow vehicle. For cases of tire failure, tire must safely accept one-third of the maximum ballasted tow vehicle gross weight.

- 5.3.2 Wheel change shall be a simple operation using standard tools.
- 5.3.3 Wheel arches shall provide ample space for wheel articulation and turning, mounting, and operation with snow chains.

SAE ARP4853

5.3.4 Front axle suspension shall be shock dampened. Design shall be such that chassis oscillation cannot build up.

5.4 Brakes:

5.4.1 A braking system shall be installed complete with all necessary equipment to safely control the fully equipped and ballasted tow vehicle under all operating conditions.

The brake mechanism shall be readily accessible for adjustments. The service brake shall have two independent systems. In case of failures of one system, a signal lamp will flash on the cab instrument panel.

ALB (anti-lock brake) should be an option.

Deceleration forces shall stay within the limits given by the aircraft manufacturer.

5.4.2 The service brake shall operate on all wheels with a minimum fading deceleration. To assist the operator, the service brake must be power assisted.

5.4.2.1 The parking brake shall engage on at least two wheels and shall hold a fully ballasted tow vehicle being in neutral shift at standstill. Emergency release for parking brake spring actuator shall be provided.

5.4.2.2 Applied parking brake shall be indicated in the cab by a red warning lamp.

5.4.3 Simultaneous action of the service brake and the parking brake must be impossible by a safety device.

5.5 Steering:

5.5.1 Steering Mode:

a. TLTV CAT I:

Front axle steering
Four-wheel and crab steering (optional)

b. TLTV CAT II:

Front axle steering
Four-wheel and crab steering (optional)

NOTE: In case of four-wheel steering "front" always defines the direction the driver is facing.

5.5.2 Steering mode shall only be selected while tow vehicle is not moving.

5.5.3 External Turning Radius: Both categories shall be as small as possible (see Section 3).

SAE ARP4853

5.5.4 In case the tow vehicle has to be towed away, the front wheel steering has to be functional even with an engine failure at a velocity of approximately 5 kph (3 mph) and for a period of 30 min minimum.

5.5.5 **Nose Gear Oversteer Protection:** The tractor shall be equipped with an oversteer device that activates an in-cab warning light and audible alarm to indicate an impending oversteer condition.

The oversteer warning system shall allow sufficient time for the tow vehicle operator to take appropriate action to avoid nose gear structural and/or system damage. The system will be automatically activated when the airplane is coupled to the tow vehicle.

The oversteer device shall be designed to protect the range of aircraft that can be handled by the tow vehicle.

An optional system shall provide a structural fuse (or other reliable load limiting system) on the tow vehicle which will prevent the application of loads on the nose landing gear that exceed the airframe manufacturer's specified limit.

5.6 **Electrical System:**

5.6.1 The tow vehicle shall be provided with a complete and good commercial quality electrical starting and lighting system. The system shall be made from reliable components.

5.6.2 The system shall operate with 24 V (or 12) DC system with battery capacity to suit electrical demand.

5.6.3 The following illumination is required:

5.6.3.1 Headlights at front and rear

5.6.3.2 Marker lights at front and rear

5.6.3.3 A combination of lights for indicator lights, for direction flashers, braking and taillight (at both ends of tow vehicle). Direction flashers shall be visible from the side.

5.6.3.4 Warning beacons shall be fitted according to airport regulations.

5.6.3.5 Lamps shall be provided to illuminate coupling area.

5.6.3.6 A main battery switch is to be provided.

5.7 Sufficient space is to be provided for the fitting of a GPU.

5.7.1 All connectors are to be self-sealing and quickly disconnectable.

5.8 **Tow Coupling (for recovery of tow vehicle):**

SAE ARP4853

- 5.8.1 A universal coupling shall be provided at the center of the front end.
- 5.8.2 There shall be a recovery coupling for emergencies on both sides at the rear-end.
- 5.9 Cab:
- 5.9.1 Provision must be made to have good visibility of the coupling area.
- 5.9.2 Driver's seat shall be adjustable in height, seating position, and backward position. The seat shall be turned by activating two foot pedals. Feet have to be in a safe position while seat is turning.
- 5.9.3 Cabin shall have a sunshine roof (glass with sun protection/tinted) and be located directly above the driver's seat.
- 5.9.4 The side windows shall be designed as sliding windows. All windows shall be furnished with electrical heating or equivalent to prevent mist forming (optional).
- 5.9.5 Front and rear windows shall be installed in an appropriate angle to minimize reflections.
- 5.9.6 A second seat shall be installed for a co-driver.
- 5.9.7 Ventilation and heating of the cabin shall be provided.
- 5.9.8 The vehicle shall have front and rear windshield wipers separately activated. Wiper interval switch shall be standard. Washers shall be available as an option.
- 5.9.9 Ergonomic guidelines are to be taken into consideration.
- 5.9.10 If cabin is equipped with a lifting device, an automatic lifting stop shall be installed at a central place of the cabin. Activation of the lifting stop shall be indicated in the cabin visually.
- 5.9.11 A mirror allowing observation of the nose landing gear during operation shall be installed in the cabin.
- 5.9.12 There shall be a storage which can hold a 286 x 324 x 76 mm (1125 x 1275 x 3 in) size file.
- 5.9.13 Interior illumination of the cabin shall be 350 lux.
- 5.9.14 Two outside mirrors shall be provided to enable driver to observe rear area. Electrical heating and adjustment are optional.
- 5.9.15 Driver must have a good field of visibility from all seat positions.
- 5.10 Logic Connection of Driver's Seat and Driving Direction:
- 5.10.1 All controls shall be automatically defined by the direction the driver is facing.

SAE ARP4853

5.10.2 The steering directions (mode) of the vehicle shall always be regarded as forward direction.

The front axle steering will always be automatically changed when the driver's seat is turned.

5.10.3 Illumination: The tow vehicle shall have identical illumination at front and rear which will be switched automatically when driver's seat is turned (i.e., the reversing lights will serve as headlights and vice-versa).

5.11 The tow vehicle shall be equipped with the following controls:

- Throttle
- Service brake
- Flashers/dimming switch
- Emergency stop button
- Direction selection (vehicle travel)
- Steering mode selector
- Seat rotation (swivel) control
- Parking brake

5.12 The tow vehicle shall be equipped with the following instruments/indicators:

- Multiwarning signal (flashing)
- Steering mode indicator: all wheel/crab (only by four-wheel steering)
- Parking brake set

5.13 The tow vehicle shall be equipped with the following switches and indication/control lamps:

- Ignition switch with anti-restart
- Start/stop device for diesel engine
- Warning beacons
- Light switches
- Dim switch
- Other illumination (working lamps)
- Position lights
- Windshield wipers and washers in front and rear
- Heating/ventilation
- Raising/lowering of cabin
- Controls for coupling system
- Switch to select type of aircraft
- Heating for windows in front and rear (optional)
- Heating for mirrors (optional)
- Electrical adjustment for mirrors (optional)
- Dimmer for panel illumination
- Testing device for all alarm circuits/lamps
- Steering angle indication (optional)

SAE ARP4853

5.14 Monitoring and Alarm Circuits/Lights:

5.14.1 The following instrument indicators are mandatory on the operation panel in the cab:

Operation hour meter
Battery charging control light

Engine oil pressure (monitor and warning signal) light
Engine temperature of coolant (monitor and warning signal)
Engine coolant low level warning
Fuel gauge for each tank
Brake pressure warning
Indication: "Vehicle ready for operation" (second/simultaneous verification of A/C relevant settings)
(Identification of type of aircraft by pickup system)

Speed meter
High beam (headlight) is on (blue signal)
Heater is on
Flashers are on
Electrical clock

5.14.2 The following should be optional and mounted in a panel accessible for engineering:

Monitors indicating:

Preliminary heating
Hydraulic oil for each tank
Hydraulic oil temperature
Maintenance required for hydraulic filter
Emergency steering in operation
Emergency stop is activated

All operating instruments and alarm signals shall be labeled on the panel.

5.15 Miscellaneous:

Quick check points for hydraulic oil pressure shall be installed.

Jacking points for wheel change and general maintenance shall be provided on the chassis.

Size of fuel tanks shall allow a one day operation for approximately 12 h with 50% load.

SAE ARP4853**5.16 Coupling System:**

The tow vehicle should be designed for coupling to the aircraft's nose landing gear.

- 5.16.1 The nosewheel coupling and holding system must be capable of capturing all aircraft types defined in 1.4, telescoping of the nose landing gear without pressure in the strut (exception: pressureless nosewheel tires) and turn geometry of nonvertical nose landing gear designs.
- 5.16.2 The nosewheel must only be captured at the tire tread surface.
- 5.16.3 While in the fully engaged position the nosewheel must remain stabilized in the locking mechanism under all dynamic conditions. The nosewheel must be retained above the axle to prevent escape in the upward direction.
- 5.16.4 Aircraft will be braked by wheel chocks or the parking brake and may not be moved in horizontal direction during pick up or release!
- 5.16.5 In fully coupled position the clamp device of the coupling system must lock automatically so that in case of hydraulic failure the nose landing gear is not involuntarily releasable.
- 5.16.6 In case of failure of the coupling system and/or clamp device the nose landing gear shall be released via an emergency system and in case the emergency system fails, it must be possible to free the wheel manually.
- 5.16.7 The coupling system must be able to identify the type or class of aircraft that has been picked up and if the wrong type of aircraft has been programmed by the operator (or in case of incorrect preselection of aircraft type) the prime mover of the tow vehicle will be locked.
- 5.16.8 A positioning of the nose gear lower than during normal operations must be possible for docking purposes.

6. OPTIONS:

Tow vehicle manufacturers must make the following options available to customers. The standard version of the towbarless tow vehicle will include all required provisions such as extra space to house optional components and wiring.

- 6.1 Power supply for GPU shall be determined by each airline. Output and tolerances shall be in accordance with the latest A/C manufacturers requirements.
- 6.2 Dispatch towing kit, stronger engine, and drivelines.
- 6.3 Automatic fire extinguisher system
- 6.4 Airplane communication