FLATBEDDISPATCHERS

Open-Deck Broker Setup Checklist

Everything a flatbed, double drop, RGN or lowboy carrier should have ready before a broker tenders specialized freight. Build it once, keep it in one folder, send it in minutes.

Carrier: _____ MC #: _____ USDOT #: _____ Date: _____

1. The standard packet (every broker)

- ☐ Signed broker-carrier agreement. Read the pay terms, the double-brokering clause and any fines before you sign.
  Broker name: _____ Date signed: _____
- ☐ W-9 with your legal business name and EIN exactly as on your authority.
  Legal name: _____ EIN: _____
- ☐ Operating authority: your MC certificate or the FMCSA authority letter, plus your USDOT number.
  MC #: _____ USDOT #: _____
- ☐ Certificate of insurance (COI) sent by your agent, with the broker listed as certificate holder.
  Agent name: _____ Agent email: _____
- ☐ Remit-to and payment details: bank (ACH) form, or the notice of assignment and letter of release if your invoices go to a third party.
  Remit-to name: _____
- ☐ Company contact sheet: owner, dispatch, after-hours number, billing email.
  Contacts: _____

2. Insurance limits brokers check

Federal minimum for for-hire carriers of general (nonhazardous) freight in interstate commerce with a GVWR of 10,001 lb or more is $750,000 in liability (49 CFR 387.9). Many brokers ask for $1,000,000. High-value freight such as machinery can need a higher cargo limit than your standard policy carries. Check the load value before you book.

- ☐ Auto liability limit on the COI.
  $ amount: _____
- ☐ Motor truck cargo limit and deductible. Check exclusions for unattended loads, tarped freight and specific commodities.
  $ limit: _____ $ deductible: _____
- ☐ Trailer listed on the policy (scheduled trailers) and the VIN matches the trailer you run.
  Trailer VIN: _____
- ☐ Agent can send a COI the same day a broker asks, including higher cargo limit certificates for one load.
  Agent phone: _____

3. Open-deck proof (what wins specialized loads)

- ☐ Trailer spec sheet: deck lengths, well length, loaded deck height, capacity, axle spread, neck type, ramps, outriggers.
  Attached Y/N: _____
- ☐ Gear inventory: chains by grade and size, binders, straps with WLL, tarps by type and drop, edge protection, dunnage, flags, lights, banners.
  Attached Y/N: _____
- ☐ Photos of the truck and trailer, plus a short set of past loads: placement, every tiedown, tarp on.
  Number of photos: _____
- ☐ Oversize experience: states you have run permitted loads in, widest, tallest and heaviest load, escorts used.
  States: _____ Max W x H x weight: _____
- ☐ Securement and tarping record: years on open deck, commodities hauled (steel, lumber, machinery, building materials).
  Years: _____ Commodities: _____
- ☐ Clean inspection history: recent roadside inspections, no open cargo securement violations.
  Last inspection date: _____

4. References and new authority extras

- [ ] Two or three broker or shipper references with a contact name and email.
  Reference 1: _____ Reference 2: _____
- [ ] New MC: driver experience on open deck (years, CDL class, prior carriers) on one page.
  Driver experience summary: _____
- [ ] Tracking: ready to share location through the broker's tracking app or your ELD for the length of the load.
  ELD provider: _____
- [ ] Emergency plan: who the broker calls if the driver cannot be reached.
  Backup contact: _____

5. Before the first load with a new broker

- [ ] Carrier packet accepted and the broker confirmed you are set up (not just submitted).
  Date confirmed: _____
- [ ] Rate confirmation matches what was agreed: rate, tarp pay, detention, layover, TONU and any permit or escort pay.
  Rate con #: _____
- [ ] Pay terms and invoice method known: where to send the invoice, BOL and POD, and how many days to pay.
  Invoice email: _____ Days to pay: _____

Sources: 49 CFR 387.9 minimum levels of financial responsibility (eCFR, checked November 2, 2026): ecfr.gov/current/title-49/section-387.9. Broker requirements vary by broker; the $1,000,000 figure is a common broker request, not a federal rule.

General information, not legal or insurance advice. Confirm limits and terms with your insurance agent and each broker.