

12 red flags of a phantom carrier

A one-page checklist for the moment a carrier you don't know answers your load — with the Polish registers to verify each one in.

A · IDENTITY — IS THE COMPANY REAL?

① Registered weeks ago, offering everything

A carrier incorporated a few months ago that already quotes international capacity on every lane has either bought a shelf company or is not planning to drive at all. Youth on its own is not fraud — youth plus unlimited capacity is.

| Check it in: KRS or CEIDG — the registration date, and whether the registered activity actually covers road transport.

② A virtual address and no operating base

Real hauliers need a yard, parking and somewhere to service trucks. An address that turns out to belong to a virtual-office provider, or to a flat in a residential block, means there is nothing to visit and nobody to find afterwards.

| Check it in: the address in KRS/CEIDG — then look the same address up on a map and in street view.

③ A name one letter away from a firm you know

Near-clone names — an added "Trans", a swapped suffix, a different legal form — are the cheapest way to borrow thirty years of somebody else's reputation for the length of one load.

| Check it in: the full legal name together with the NIP — never the name written on the offer or in the email signature.

B · LICENCE & COMPLIANCE — ARE THEY ALLOWED TO DO THIS?

④ Not in the national operator register

No entry at all, an expired permit, or a Community licence number that belongs to a different company. Without a valid licence there is no liability to fall back on and no regulator to complain to.

| Check it in: KREPTD (GITD) — the operator, the licence and its validity dates.

⑤ More trucks offered than licensed

Every operator licence names how many vehicles it covers. A firm licensed for four trucks that offers you capacity on twelve lanes is passing your load on to somebody you never checked.

| Check it in: KREPTD — the licensed vehicle count against what they claim to run.

⑥ A poor ERRU risk rating

Serious infringements — driving times, overloading, tachograph manipulation — are recorded against the operator across the EU. A bad rating does not prove fraud, but it does tell you the company is already under pressure.

| Check it in: the ERRU risk score — EU-wide, through the national register.

C · MONEY & COVER — WHO PAYS WHEN THE LOAD IS GONE?

⑦ An insurance certificate that only exists as a PDF

A scan proves that a policy existed on the day it was printed. It says nothing about today: cover is cancelled for non-payment, and certificates are edited. This is the single point where most fraudulent files get through.

| Check it in: a direct confirmation from the insurer named on the OCP document — not the broker, not the PDF.

⑧ Cover that does not fit this load

A live policy is still worthless if the sum insured is below the cargo value, the territorial scope excludes your lane, or the goods type sits on the exclusion list. Electronics, tobacco, alcohol and pharmaceuticals are excluded far more often than anyone checks.

| Check it in: the policy wording and its annexes — not the one-page certificate.

⑨ VAT not active, or a bank account off the white list

An inactive VAT payer is a warning about the state of the company. And paying to an account that is not on the white list becomes your problem too — you lose the deduction and can be held jointly liable for their VAT.

| Check it in: biała lista podatników VAT — both the status and the bank account, on the day you actually pay.

D · BEHAVIOUR AT BOOKING — WHAT THE FILE DOES NOT SHOW

⑩ A rate well below the market

Nobody underprices a lane they actually intend to drive. An offer far under everyone else's is not a bargain — it is the price of getting your load handed over quickly.

| Check it against: your own rate history for that lane, that week.

⑪ Free-mail, mobile only, contacts changed last week

A company domain, a landline and a long exchange history all take money and time to build. A phantom's do not — so it turns up with a free mailbox, a prepaid mobile and a profile whose details changed a few days ago.

| Check it in: the freight-exchange profile history, the age of the account, and the email domain.

⑫ The plate arrives late, or changes after assignment

The vehicle and driver are named only at the last moment, or swapped after the order is confirmed for a truck registered to a different company. That swap is the moment the load leaves your control.

| Check it in: the plate against the vehicles on the operator's licence — and the driver's details before loading, not after.

fleetvett.com — we build carrier verification into the TMS a forwarder already runs. About three minutes per carrier instead of half an hour, without replacing anything.

Want us to check 10 of your carriers? Send us their NIP numbers — we send the report back free, no obligation.