

ON A MISSION

TANK CONTAINERS • CHEMICAL EXPRESS IS RIDING THE DIGITISATION WAVE, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW TOOLS THAT ARE BEING DEVELOPED TO IMPROVE VISIBILITY

THE TRANSPORT OF liquid chemicals in bulk is a very specialised field, with significant differences compared to other goods. This is largely to do with the constant technological and regulatory updates, particularly for those chemicals classified as dangerous, and for the increasingly innovative challenges that the market offers – electronic documentation, the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), geofencing and the use of sensors, among others.

All these elements have contributed to a radical change in the type of service required from customers of their carriers; visibility



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in the whole supply chain has become essential in measuring tank container operators' performance, as well as providing data on punctuality, accuracy of service and flexibility.

Chemical Express, in response to these developing requirements, has recently instigated a cooperation with its partners involved in fleet management control (Transics) and transport management software (Space Computer). As a result of this shared commitment, Chemical Express's planners, using an estimated time of arrival (ETA) function linked to each driver's 'mission', now have real-time information about a shipment's status. In this way, it is possible to reduce the impact of unexpected events in each movement, allowing planners to find

alternative solutions and, similarly, to avoid late arrival, missed loadings or other problems.

This tool is available for Chemical Express's drivers through a touch-screen onboard computer, which records all driver and truck information, as well as data from other sources, such as temperature sensors and document scanners, and allows the driver and the dispatcher to exchange information in real time.

By means of this 'missions system', every single part of the transport, including the first or last leg of an intermodal transport is constantly updated and monitored. Chemical Express is currently testing the tool with its main sub-contractors via a mobile app, with the aim of extending it to all sub-contractors in September.

INTO THE FUTURE

The next step in the medium term is to extend usage of the app with additional functions to Chemical Express's main customers. In this way it will be possible to share the information and, mostly, ensure transparent operations for customers – what the European Chemical Transport Association (ECTA) has termed 'transport visibility'. For this reason, Chemical Express is looking with much interest in the new ECTA best practice guideline, *Transport Visibility within Bulk Chemicals* (HCB May 2020, page 34), and the app will work in accordance with these guidelines.

"We expect that technological innovation will radically change the transport sector, as is already happening in our daily life," says Francesco Mattozzi, account manager at Chemical Express. "In the near future the e-ECD (electronic European cleaning document) will be used by stakeholders in the European petrochemical supply chain (chemicals producers, tank cleaning operators, tank storage operators and transport companies) to share data, offering advantages like more transparent cleaning cycles, fewer errors and reduced risk of contamination, as well as blockchain-enabled platforms to allow all the parties involved to access in real time all the shipping data and documents."

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