Order to Delivery Dispatch

Standard Operating Procedure, sanitized sample

TNDS-SAMPLE-SOP-201 | Version 1.0 | Status: Sample | September 2026

SAMPLE DOCUMENT. Built from general petroleum distribution practice to show format and rigor. It contains no client information, no client data, and no client system. Owners, thresholds, and system names appear in brackets because those are set during the engagement.

About This Sample

This procedure covers the move from a customer order to a closed, invoiced delivery. It is the operation's spine. When it lives in one person's head, every other problem in the company is downstream of that.

The common finding is not that dispatchers are careless. It is that there is no system of record: the order is a printed ticket, the schedule is a whiteboard, and the reason a load moved is a conversation nobody wrote down. This procedure is what a dispatch system of record looks like before any software is chosen.

Contents

1. Purpose

To move a customer order to a completed delivery with the right product in the right quantity at the right time, using a truck and driver legally able to make the run, with a written record of the decision and the result.

2. Scope

- Applies to all delivered volume: bulk delivery, tank wagon, keep-full and will-call accounts, and transport movements between plants or terminals.
- Applies to every order source: phone, email, portal, standing schedule, and tank monitor signal.
- Does not cover customer pickup at a rack or cardlock, which is a separate procedure.
- Does not cover pricing. The price on the order comes from the pricing procedure and is not set at dispatch.
- Does not cover the credit decision itself. Dispatch reads the credit status; it does not grant or release a hold.

3. Roles

Role	Owns	Does not own
[Order Desk]	Steps 1 through 4. Taking the order, confirming what the customer actually needs, and checking that the tank can receive it.	Releasing a credit hold. Assigning a truck.
[Dispatcher]	Steps 5 through 9. Load assignment, driver assignment, the load plan, and the paperwork that leaves with the truck.	Changing a customer's product, quantity, or price.
[Driver]	Step 10. Executing the delivery and recording what was actually delivered.	Deciding whether an over-delivery is acceptable.
[Billing]	Steps 11 and 12. Reconciling the ticket to the order and closing it.	Adjusting a delivered quantity without a documented reason.
[Credit Owner]	Setting and releasing credit holds.	Dispatching around a hold.

Roles, not names. The role-to-person map lives on the location roster, outside this document and outside the system, so the procedure survives a personnel change. In a small operation one person may hold several roles. The roles still stay separate on paper, because that is what makes the handoffs visible when the operation grows or that person is out.

4. Definitions

Term	Meaning in this procedure
Order	A recorded commitment to deliver a stated product and quantity to a stated location inside a stated window. A verbal request is not an order until it is recorded.
Ullage	The space available in the receiving tank at the time of delivery. Capacity minus current volume minus the safe fill allowance.
Load plan	The set of compartments, products, and quantities assigned to one truck for one trip, with the delivery sequence.
Delivery window	The period the customer has agreed to receive product. A window with no end time is not a window.
Keep-full account	An account where the operator, not the customer, decides when to deliver. The operator carries the run-out risk.
Run-out	A customer out of product. Recorded as an exception whether or not the customer complains.
Split load	One trip serving more than one customer or more than one product, where compartment assignment governs delivery sequence.
Shipping papers	The documents required to accompany a hazardous materials shipment, including emergency response information, under 49 CFR Part 172, Subparts C and G.

5. Procedure

#	Action	Owner	Evidence it happened
1	Record the order the moment it is received: account, ship-to location, product, quantity, requested window, and who asked. A request that is not recorded is not an order and will not be dispatched.	[Order Desk]	Order record with a creation timestamp
2	Check the account's credit standing. A held account goes to stop point G1 before anything else happens.	[Order Desk]	Credit status read at order time, stamped on the order
3	Confirm product and quantity against what the site actually takes. Confirm the window has a start and an end.	[Order Desk]	Confirmed order fields
4	Confirm the quantity will fit: current tank reading or monitor value, capacity, and safe fill allowance. A quantity that exceeds ullage goes to stop point G2.	[Order Desk]	Ullage figure and its source recorded on the order
5	Assign the order to a load. Group by product, geography, and window. Record why a load was built the way it was when the grouping is not obvious.	[Dispatcher]	Load record with its assigned orders
6	Assign a truck. Confirm the unit is in service, that its equipment suits the site, and that its required tests and inspections are current.	[Dispatcher]	Unit assignment, equipment check
7	Assign a driver. Confirm the driver is qualified for the product and the equipment and has the available hours to complete the run legally under 49 CFR Part 395. This goes to stop point G3.	[Dispatcher]	Driver assignment with the available-hours check recorded
8	Build the load plan: compartments, products, quantities, and delivery sequence. On a split load, the compartment assignment is part of the plan, not a decision left to the yard.	[Dispatcher]	Load plan issued to the driver
9	Issue shipping papers and emergency response information with the load, per 49 CFR Part 172, Subparts C and G.	[Dispatcher]	Paperwork issued, retained per the records table
10	Deliver. The driver records the delivered quantity, the meter or ticket number, the time, and any exception at the site before leaving it.	[Driver]	Delivery ticket, signed or electronically confirmed
11	Reconcile the delivered quantity to the ordered quantity and to the load. A variance beyond [threshold] is an exception, not a rounding difference.	[Billing]	Reconciliation result on the order
12	Close the order and release it to invoicing. An order that cannot be closed stays open and visible, never quietly deleted.	[Billing]	Order status and close timestamp

6. Stop Points

A stop point halts the procedure. It is not a reminder and it is not a preference. Work does not continue past it until the condition clears.

ID	Condition	Action	Why it is a point
G1	The account is on credit hold or past the agreed terms.	Hold the order. Route it to the [Credit Owner] for a decision. Dispatch does not release a hold and does not deliver against one.	Delivering on a held account converts a collections problem into a bigger collections problem, and it teaches the customer the hold is not real. The decision belongs to whoever carries the receivable.
G2	The ordered quantity exceeds available ullage at the receiving tank.	Reduce the drop or split the load before the truck is assigned. Never dispatch a quantity the tank cannot take.	An overfill is a spill, a release report, and a cleanup, and it is entirely preventable at the desk. The cost of asking for a tank reading is one phone call.

ID	Condition	Action	Why it is a point
G3	The assigned driver cannot legally complete the run, or is not qualified for the product or equipment.	Reassign before the load is built. Do not plan a run that depends on the driver getting it done anyway.	A dispatch that cannot be driven legally is not a plan, it is pressure applied to the driver. That is where hours violations and falsified logs come from, and the carrier owns the result.
G4	The load leaves without complete shipping papers and emergency response information.	Stop the truck at the point. Nothing rolls without the paperwork.	The paperwork is what tells a first responder what is in the tank. Its absence is a citation on a good day and a far worse outcome on a bad one.

7. Exceptions

- Emergency or run-out delivery. The procedure still runs, in compressed form. The points are not skipped. Record it as an emergency with the reason so run-outs can be counted later.
- Customer refuses or cannot receive on arrival. The driver records the refusal reason on the ticket before leaving. The order returns to open, it is not closed as delivered.
- Partial delivery. Record delivered quantity and remaining need separately. A partial is not a short delivery and must not be reconciled as one.
- Tank reading unavailable at order time. Deliver to the smaller of the requested quantity and a conservative estimate, and record that the reading was estimated. An estimate is never recorded as a reading.
- Order changed after the load is built. Change the order record, not the driver's copy. A verbal change that exists only in the cab is how two people end up believing different things about the same load.

8. Records and Retention

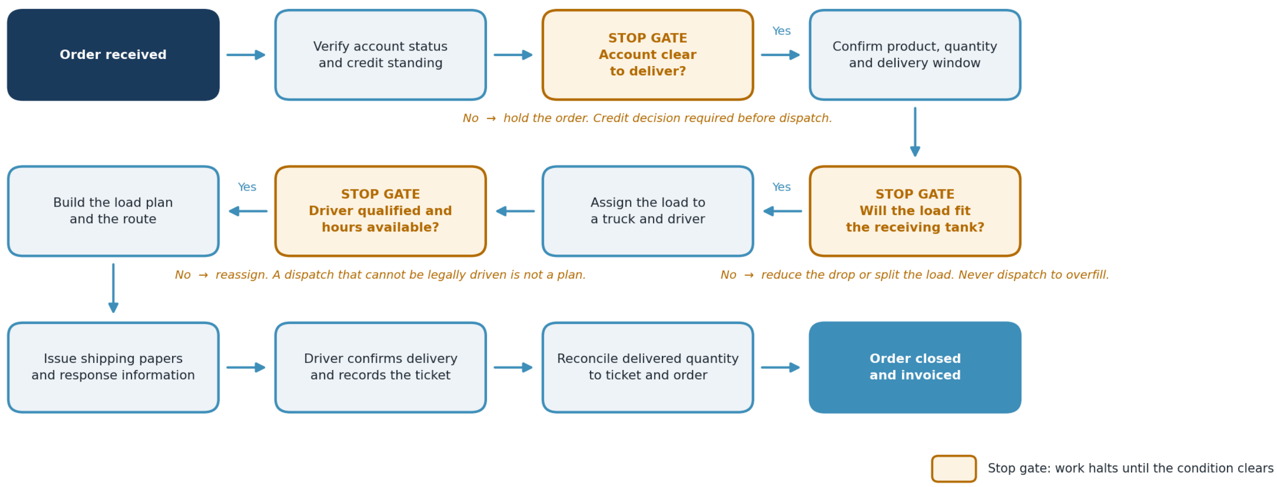
Record	Stored at	Retention	Owner
Order record, including exceptions	[system of record]	[period]	[Order Desk]
Credit status read at order time	[system of record]	[period]	[Credit Owner]
Load plan and unit assignment	[system of record]	[period]	[Dispatcher]
Driver assignment and hours check	[system of record]	[period]	[Dispatcher]
Shipping papers and emergency response information	[records location]	Per 49 CFR Part 172 and company policy, whichever is longer	[Dispatcher]
Delivery tickets	[records location]	[period]	[Billing]
Reconciliation variances and run-out log	[system of record]	[period]	[Billing]

Retention periods are bracketed because they are set by the operation's own record policy and by the regulations that apply to its products and lanes. Hazardous materials shipping paper retention is governed by 49 CFR Part 172; the company policy period is often longer and the longer period governs.

9. Revision History

Version	Date	Change	Approved by
1.0	2026-09-13	Sample release. Sanitized demonstration document, no client content.	Jacob Johnston, True North Data Strategies LLC

Appendix A. Process Flow



Amber nodes are stop points. Work halts at a stop point until the condition clears.

Appendix B. Why This Procedure Is Built This Way

The order is the record, not the ticket

In most operations without a dispatch system, the printed ticket is the only artifact and it disappears into a delivery folder. Step 1 makes the order the record and the ticket a result of it. That single change is what lets anyone answer later why a load moved, who asked for it, and whether it arrived when it was promised.

Points before assignment, not after

Credit, ullage, and driver hours are all checked before a truck is committed. Checking them after is how a loaded truck ends up sitting in a yard, and a truck sitting in a yard creates pressure to deliver anyway. Points are cheap at the desk and expensive at the point.

Exceptions are counted, not absorbed

Run-outs, refusals, partials, and variances all get recorded even when nobody complains. An operation that absorbs exceptions quietly cannot tell whether it is getting better or worse, and it cannot make the case for another truck or another driver when it needs one. The exception log is the evidence.

The driver is not the last line of defense

Every point here moves a decision upstream of the person holding the hose. That is deliberate. When the dispatch plan is sound, the driver's job is to execute it safely rather than to catch someone else's error at the fill point under time pressure.