



# Stowaways

*the problem, practical examples and measures*





# Index

Stowaways are a difficult and expensive problem .....	2
The problem .....	4
Brexit .....	5
What methods are used by stowaways?.....	6
Three practical examples.....	8
What is being done to prevent stowaways? .....	10
What measures are still required?.....	11
As a shipping agent or carrier, what can you do to prevent stowaways?.....	12
Can you insure yourself against stowaways?.....	15
Code of Practice .....	16
How do you simplify the Code of Practice? .....	18
Tips for dealing with stowaways .....	20
Colophon / Sources .....	21

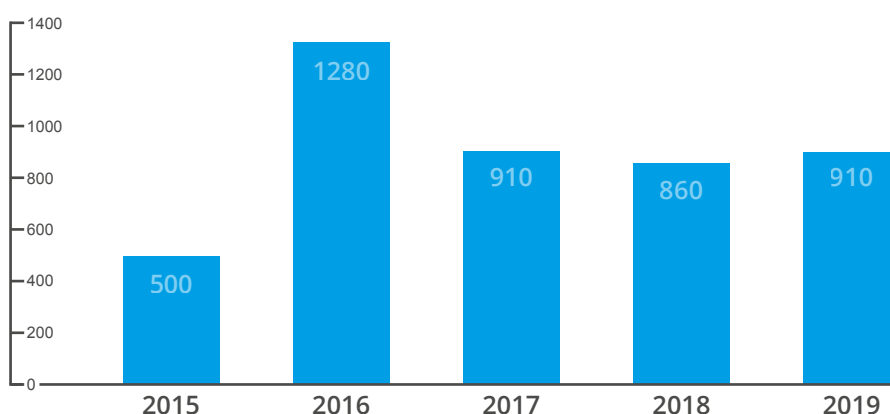


## Stowaways: a difficult and expensive problem

It could very well be something that all lorry drivers fear: migrants trying to reach the UK in their trailer – otherwise known as ‘stowaways’. Who is responsible when refugees are found in your lorry? As a driver, you might simply happen to find yourself in a situation that has major consequences. In the UK, they will even consider you a suspect and fine you, which is something that you will want to avoid as a driver, but definitely also as a shipping agent.

Not to mention the damage that stowaways cause. Because they are spending prolonged periods cooped up among the goods, the cargo is becoming damaged or contaminated. And even if the cargo isn't damaged, recipients are often refusing it. The insurer will only reimburse for visible damage, so the costs need to be covered by the shipping agent. What's more, shipping companies are also incurring damage caused by the shipment being delayed. Finally, the transport company and the driver will receive high fines for each stowaway found.

Number of stowaways found in the Netherlands per year (Hoek van Holland, Europoort, IJmuiden and Vlissingen)



Source: The Royal Netherlands Marechaussee

It is a difficult and expensive problem to resolve. Despite all the measures taken by ferry companies and authorities, the problem of stowaways is still existing. And what is going to happen when more stringent customs checks come into force at the end of this year due to Brexit? As a shipping agent, this is something we need to prepare for. In any case, it is important to observe the Code of Practice at all times.

In this white paper, which has been developed by Imbema in conjunction with TNL, we examine in greater depth the problem of 'stowaways' and what you can do about them. This will keep you, the shipping agent, up to date with a number of important developments, tell you what methods are being used by stowaways, what the consequences are and how you can make the shipment to the UK that little bit simpler and more secure. Because technological developments are advancing all the time. We're happy to help you on your way.



**Manolo de la Fuente**

*Business Unit Manager SBS  
Imbema Transport & Logistiek*



**Hélène Minderman**

*Security Professional  
Transport & Logistiek Nederland*

## What are stowaways?

refugees - migrants - fortune hunters

'Stowaways' is a collective term for all migrants who try to illegally climb into lorries in order to enter the United Kingdom undetected.



Foto: Sue Martin

## The problem

The problem of stowaways trying to climb on board lorries has always existed, only in the past, it only used to happen occasionally. All that changed when in 2015, an enormous flood of refugees began moving towards Europe. Illegal migrants try to stow away to the United Kingdom from various sea ports on board a lorry. Putting their own lives at risk, they allow themselves to be locked up in trailers and containers, often helped by human traffickers. Then there are all the consequences of doing this.

Migrants also regularly climb underneath lorries and hang on to the axle. At Calais, this caused threatening situations and huge delays.

After the migrant crossing place in Northern France was closed at the end of 2016 – the notorious ‘Calais Jungle’ – the problem shifted also to other places. Increasing numbers of migrants now try to cross to the other side via Belgian and Dutch sea ports. The news over the past year has been full of:

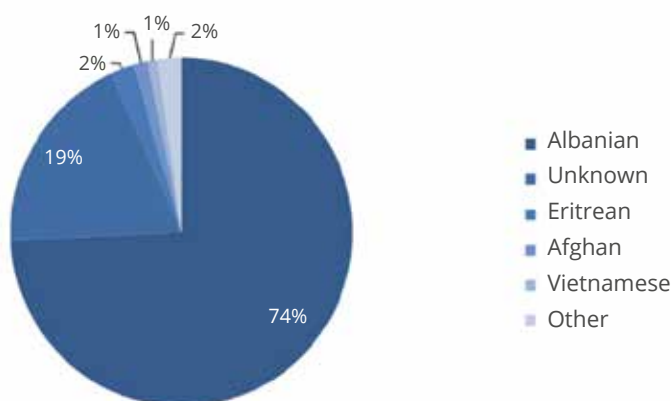
- 19-11-19 **25 stowaways found alive in refrigerated container on ferry**
- 06-11-19 **Twelve adults and four children in lorry at the Port of IJmuiden**
- 23-10-19 **British police find 39 dead in lorry**
- 07-08-19 **The Dutch Marechaussee finds 21 stowaways in a refrigerated lorry**
- 16-06-19 **Pregnant woman and five children found hidden in lorry among tyres**
- 27-05-19 **Sniffer dog barks at refrigerated vehicle: fifteen foreign nationals found**
- 11-05-19 **Police find 34 asylum seekers in lorry in Vlaardingen**

Most of these stowaways (mainly young men) come from Albania, which is not a war zone. They leave the country voluntarily because it is one of the poorest countries in Europe. A third of young people under the age of 25 are unemployed. They have nothing to lose. They want to travel to the United Kingdom – ‘the promised land’ – for economic reasons. The UK does not have a national identity card, making it relatively easy to get a job illegally and to build a future. Family members are often living there already. So, in the UK, you have a large illegal Albanian community, where everyone helps one another to get jobs and accommodation on the black market. Finally, the language is another plus point.

Due to the more stringent checks in the ports, the problem is now increasingly shifting inland in the Netherlands. Migrants are trying to climb into lorries earlier on the route, such as along the A16, A15 and the A12. But stowaways are increasingly being detected in Gelderland or Limburg too, and drivers aren't always aware.

In Belgium, many parking spaces along the motorways to the ports are closed, making drivers more likely to park in unsafe parking spaces. Once again, this makes it easier for migrants to climb into a trailer.

**Nationality of people illegally trying to make the crossing to the UK:**



Source: The Royal Netherlands Marechaussee

## Is Brexit causing the number of stowaways to increase?



With Brexit, TLN is afraid of a potential extra stream of stowaways in the ports. Up to and including 31 December 2020, there will be no other customs procedures than there are now. Over the course of 2020, the new rules will become clearer, but we can be sure that things will change. For example, various customs procedures will be introduced, and these procedures will cause major delays in the ports.

This will mean long queues outside of the gates of the ferry terminals, making it easier for stowaways to board lorries. Companies that do business with the United Kingdom need to prepare for this.

**A British study calculated the following:**

10,000 lorries arrive in Dover every day. If it takes 70 seconds to inspect each lorry, the waiting time will be around six days. The British have announced that they won't be inspecting every single cargo, but all the same.



## What methods are used by stowaways?

### The individual 'stowaways'

Individual 'stowaways' try to make the illegal crossing to the United Kingdom independently. They say that they plan their journey based on information obtained from friends and acquaintances. They book a cheap flight from Tirana to Amsterdam. The journey is easy because Albanians are allowed to travel through Europe for three months without a visa. They use Google Maps to work out how to reach the Port of Rotterdam. The most difficult thing is getting to the Hoek van Holland marshalling yard. They are caught when they climb over the fences.

Many migrants stay in old bunkers until they've found a gap in the fence or another shortcut. Sometimes they jump into the Nieuwe Waterweg ship canal in order to swim around the electric fencing. On the Hoek van Holland site, they cut open the tarpaulin of a lorry and climb into a cargo hold, before resealing the cut again on the inside. This group of criminals has a major chance of being caught. Although they say they planned their trip independently, there is often a people trafficking network behind it.





### **Organised people traffickers**

A lot of the people trafficking that goes on is organised by the Albanian mafia. The Albanian Mafia is inventive, always finding new places or ways of trafficking migrants using lorries, rubber dinghies, sailing yachts or small aircraft. They operate like professional companies and leave few traces behind.

For thousands of euros, you can travel to the UK in a refrigerated container or a sealed cargo hold. Migrants are collected from meeting points during

the night by people traffickers to transport them to a car park along the motorway out of the view of the cameras. From these car parks, they are put into the cargo hold of a lorry and transported to the United Kingdom.

Because of the effective insulation, finding stowaways in refrigerated containers can be difficult. Sniffer dogs are extremely effective at checking lorries for stowaways and are also used to check refrigerated containers.

*“Because of the effective insulation, finding stowaways in refrigerated containers can be difficult.”*





## Three practical examples

### 1 H.J. van Bentum Trailer Service

At H.J. van Bentum Trailer Service, which specialises in transport to the United Kingdom, they have been familiar with the problem of stowaways for years. “We try to prevent stowaways as far as possible by following the UK Border Force’s Code of Practice”, explains Deputy Director Casper Beijen. “Our drivers have been ordered to inspect the lorries and the cargo as far as possible, but how far can you actually go? One of our competitors even found stowaways in a pallet box.

We also allow our drivers to spend the night in secure parking spaces. But it is crazy that we have to hide ourselves behind fences because the authorities don’t have control over the situation. Thorough border checks need to be made on the external borders of Europe to prevent the influx of stowaways. Carriers and ferry companies are now incurring high costs for preventative measures and damage as a result of stowaway practices. Recently, I even heard that in addition to paying the fine, a carrier must also pay a further €2800 for a stowaway’s return ticket – that should not be possible. As a result, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to find drivers who want to drive to the United Kingdom. Stowaways are becoming increasingly more aggressive and violent. Insurance premiums are set to increase due to the increased damage to cargo and equipment.

## 2

**Schavemaker Logistics**

Schavemaker Logistics and Transport recognise the problem of stowaways. “Luckily we only travel to the UK in a limited number of lorries”, explains Susanne Dirksen, Sales Manager at Schavemaker Logistics and Transport. “We also have a cross dock in Breda, which allows us to travel to the ports without stopping. What’s more, we have made the conscious decision not to put the words ‘ferry transport’ on our trailers, so that potential stowaways don’t know where we’re going. We have, of course, briefed our drivers properly too. They know where the weak spots on certain routes are and know that they need to pay attention there and need to keep on driving. We also follow the UK’s Code of Practice to prevent migrants from hitching a ride. If they do succeed, however, this has far-reaching consequences such as loss of cargo, damage to equipment and an impact on the driver in question.

*“It would be good if lorries in all ports would go through a scan.”*

“It would be good if lorries in all ports would go through a scan. Random checks are insufficient. AFTO, TLN, the Seaport Police and other relevant authorities should also collaborate more. That still isn’t happening enough. What’s more, the government needs to contribute to the costs involved in detaining stowaways. After all, the municipalities in question also benefit when there aren’t any illegal immigrants hanging around.” Dirksen is anxious about Brexit. “That will undoubtedly lead to traffic jams at the ferries, which will be a good opportunity for stowaways to make another attempt, with all the consequences that entails...”

## 3

**Boom Transport**

Family business Boom Transport of Venray has been travelling to the UK via Calais since the 1980s. In 2015 and 2016 in particular, that was a real challenge. Several lorries had stones thrown at them, sticks were used to hit vehicles and a driver was threatened with a knife. But the situation was threatening even without the incidents. ‘Imagine you spend six hours queuing in the traffic jam and groups of thirty, forty men spend six hours wandering around your vehicle trying to climb into, underneath or on top of it. All you can do is sit tight and watch on miserably’, says Peter Boom. ‘Aside from that, as a driver you will know beforehand that you will be spending many hours stationary, whether anything is happening or not, and that’s frustrating’, adds son Boy. What’s more, the many delays caused by the actions of migrants and the extensive checks meant higher costs. ‘The drivers aren’t simply standing there for their own enjoyment, and labour costs simply continue as normal’, explains Peter Boom. ‘Luckily, that never caused any major financial problems. We are a healthy company, but without the problems at Calais, we would have had a better year.

Luckily, refugees have never successfully entered Boom Transport’s lorries. The company provides air-conditioned transport, which means that the trailers were sealed properly anyway. And because the risk of stowaways has been present for some time, Boom Transport already took additional measures a long time ago. A sturdy pin in the cab door, an extra strap on the pallet box and an extra heavy certified lock on the trailer doors. ‘You’ll only get in with a blowtorch or a very heavy angle grinder’, explains Peter Boom.



## What is being done to prevent stowaways?

In addition to the evacuation of Calais, authorities and companies took even more measures against stowaways over the past few years. For example, the Eurotunnel made considerable investments in securing its own site and ensuring faster passage.

### Ferry companies

Ferry companies took additional security measures too, such as a higher electric fence around the port site, camera observation systems with 24-hour monitoring and cameras in the ground for filming the underside of vehicles, to fight so-called axle-hangers. Sniffer dogs and thermal imaging cameras are also being used to detect stowaways.

### The Royal Netherlands Marechaussee

The Royal Netherlands Marechaussee makes random checks for stowaways at terminals using dogs, X-ray equipment and thermal imaging cameras. Migration dogs in particular are a huge success. These dogs are specially trained to smell people. What's more, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee doesn't just try to find migrants, but also to detect people traffickers. Together with some other European countries and Europol, they conduct investigations for tackling the ringleaders. Other important measures include checks at the internal borders, at airports and at the external borders of the EU.

# What measures are still required?

Despite the additional measures taken, stowaways are still slipping through the checks. According to TLN, many more measures are still required.

## 100% checks at sea ports

The sector organisations, for example, are pleading for 100 percent checks at all sea ports with departures bound for the UK. More scanners are required in order to check all lorries. In these situations, it is important not to have a detrimental effect on the speed of logistics processes.

## Fines

Shipping agents and drivers found to be carrying a stowaway should no longer be treated like criminals and punished with high fines.

## Secure routes & parking spaces

The routes to the sea ports should also be monitored closely and safely secured. More secure parking spaces need to be created for lorries, equipped with 'smart' cameras, which are able to detect suspicious movements. TLN points out that due to a shortage of secure sites, drivers are often forced to use poorly lit parking facilities with poor security along the motorway, enabling stowaways to easily enter the lorries.

## Sharing information

Finally, TLN is asking investigation services to share risky locations and trends/developments concerning stowaways with them, so that they can warn their members in good time.



# As a shipping agent, what can you do to prevent stowaways?

Migrants are becoming increasingly more inventive and will do everything they can to travel illegally (hidden in lorries) to the UK. TLN advises shipping agents to take their own precautionary measures to safeguard themselves against stowaways. Read on for some of our tips.



## 1 Prevent risks and don't stop en route

It is important to act appropriately and to prevent risks, which is why it is necessary to take adequate precautionary measures. Imagine that the riskiest moments occur on the routes from and to the ports and in and near to the ports. You should therefore take the shortest route at all times and try not to stop en route. If you don't stop, it will become difficult for migrants to board your lorry.

## 2 Using curtainsider trailer risky

Enclosed trailers are more secure than curtainsider trailers, because stowaways cut the tarpaulins open. If you still want to use a curtainsider trailer, use a curtainsider system fitted with aluminium panels, or develop 'smart' tarpaulins, which give a signal when the tarpaulin is cut open.

## 3 TAPA TSR certification

As a shipping agent, take out TAPA TSR certification. If you work according to the TAPA TSR standard, the transport is safely secured.

## 4 Fit extra locks

Fit your lorry's rear doors with a Kiwa SCM approved security lock. An approved lock provides exceedingly strong security. What's more, thieves are more likely to leave a trailer or container alone if it has an additional lock.

## 6 Code of practice

Check your lorry prior to departure and after every stop and record this in the 'vehicle checklist'. Before entering the British check zone, carry out a final check. This checklist proves to the UK immigration service that you have done everything you can to keep stowaways out of your lorry.

## 8 CO<sup>2</sup> check

Make use of the CO<sup>2</sup> check, record this and produce a supporting document that you have allowed such check to take place.

## 5 Crime training

TLN offers crime training, with a module on how to prevent stowaways? This training counts towards mandatory periodic training of drivers (Code-95). Drivers learn how to carry out the checks and to use the 'Vehicle checklist' correctly.

## 7 Tachograph

Print out the tachograph immediately if you have to keep on driving longer than permitted. Or if you have exceeded the driving time to board the train or boat due to a delay at the terminal. Or if it takes more time to find a secure parking space.

## 9 No advertising

Do not place too many adverts on the walls of your trailer. If you put 'Ferry transport' on your trailer, migrants will know that you are travelling to the United Kingdom and you are increasing the risk of stowaways.





## 10 Advanced locks

With an electronic lock, you can decide for yourself when the lock is opened and by whom. It can also be used to read its history and prove that the doors to your trailer have remained closed.

## 11 Monitor your cargo

Whenever you ship fragile cargo, we recommend monitoring your cargo in real time, as this will enable you to deliver a report automatically, stating exactly what has happened to your cargo and whether it has been shipped under the agreed conditions.

## 12 Driving times and rest periods decree

Ensure that regulation 1 of the driving times and rest periods decree 561/2006 is available in the cab in different languages. This guideline explains that drivers may deviate from the maximum driving times occasionally under exceptional circumstances.

This can be downloaded at QR code:

[https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/road/social\\_provisions/driving\\_time/guidance\\_notes\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/road/social_provisions/driving_time/guidance_notes_en)





# Can you insure yourself against stowaways?

The damage caused by 'stowaways' is increasing all the time for the transport sector, and it's no longer simply a case of cut tarpaulins, forced doors or broken locks. Damage to cargo, damage caused by a delay to the shipment and the loss of clients are causing increased costs. A shipping agent can insure himself against some damage, whereas other types of damage cannot be insured and must be covered by the shipping agent at all times.

## Damage to lorries

Damage to lorries can be covered with a motor vehicle insurance, only this often involves paying an excess. This excess applies to each incident that occurs. So, if something happens ten times, you will have to pay ten times the excess. Some insurers have a lower excess if you meet the security requirements. What requirements these are depends on the type of goods being transported. Ask your insurance company for its terms and conditions.



## Damage to cargo

A carrier's liability insurance covers damage to cargo, for which the shipping agent is liable, only this insurance doesn't resolve all problems. Logistical liability insurances are based on the international CMR convention, which states when a carrier is liable for damage to its cargo and for what amounts. These amounts may be lower than the actual damage. In other words, the insurer won't cover the total cost of the damage. You also have to contend with excess per incident.

When stowaways have been sitting among the cargo, the recipient often refuses the cargo, even if there isn't any direct visible damage, because they don't know what's happened to the items. But an insurer only reimburses visible damage, which means that the shipping agent has to cover the damage. Although a shipping agent is not actually obliged to do so, in such situations he nevertheless feels forced to pay for the damage in order to remain on good terms with his customer.



Damage caused by a delay to your shipment is not always included in your liability insurance, so please take this into account when taking out insurance. Damage such as the loss of clients cannot be insured.



## Code of Practice

The UK Border Force has drafted what is known as a Code of Practice – among which a vehicle checklist containing requirements for drivers travelling to the United Kingdom. The UK has drafted this Code of Practice with the aim to prevent stowaways.

As a shipping agent, it is crucial to inform your drivers about the importance of applying the Code of Practice correctly. Unfortunately, this doesn't happen sufficiently in practice. It has major consequences when you don't observe the Code of Practice.

The “vehicle checklist” must be completed by the driver after every stop. Filling it in afterwards is not accepted by the UK Border Force. When the UK Border Force comes across a stowaway in the lorry, both the driver and the employer receive a maximum fine of GBP 2000 per stowaway found.

Vehicle security checklist					
Company name:		Vehicle number:			
Loaded at:		Trailer number:			
On (date):					
Check	After loading	1st Stop	2nd Stop	Final	Extra check if time between 3rd party-check + embarkation >15 min.
	Date:	Date:	Date:	Check (3)	
Vehicle/Trailer inside	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Tilts and roof checked for damage	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
External compartments checked	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Below vehicle checked	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
TIR cord tight and in place and checked (1)	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Seal in place and checked (2)	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Padlock in place and checked (2)	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Seal/Padlock number					
3rd party check (e.g CO2, PMMW)	Yes / No				
Cabin-Check	Yes / No	Yes / No			
Time checked					
Location of Check					
Driver's signature					

### INSPECTION TIPS

Physical checks to the TIR cable, seal and padlocks are very important:

Watch out for TIR cables that have been cut through then repaired again with glue or clasps and check the cable for any signs of this.

Check that seals and padlocks haven't been cut through or broken and repaired. If a padlock is difficult to open or close, this could indicate that it has been tampered with. Seals are also regularly 'expertly' repaired!

## Accreditation system

It is crucial to implement the Code of Practice requirements and security measures in the company procedures. Shipping agents that have implemented the Code of Practice in full may submit an accreditation request to the UK Border Agency. All procedures must have been documented and it must be possible to prove this, such as by including the Code of Practice in the driver's handbook and/or by discussing it during the work consultation and recording it with minutes.

However, accreditation doesn't mean that no more fines will be imposed. As a shipping agent, you won't receive a fine, but the driver isn't covered by the accreditation system. This means that fines can be imposed on the driver. TLN stresses that accreditation must always go hand in hand with compliance with the Code of Practice. Accreditation therefore doesn't serve as a replacement to the Code of Practice.

If you meet the conditions, you may submit the accreditation request to the UK Border Agency:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-to-join-civil-penalty-accreditation-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-to-join-civil-penalty-accreditation-scheme)





## How do you simplify the Code of Practice?

Completing and keeping up to date this vehicle checklist by hand requires rather a lot of time and discipline on the part of the driver, if it is to happen at all. Things therefore often go wrong in practice, with all the consequences that this entails. The driver is regarded as a suspect and the driver and the shipping agent receive a fine. Current technological developments are making it easier and safer to check the vehicle and the security measures.

### **Electronic lock**

When you, the shipping agent, require additional assurance or want to make things easy for the driver, it is useful to choose an electronic lock. The logistical planning service can then decide for itself who may open which lock and when. Such a lock records when and by whom it is opened and what the tilt cord is attached to. You can then read afterwards on the lock when the lock has been opened. An example of such a lock is the SBS BDI.

### **Advanced telematics lock**

For shipping companies transporting high-value or fragile cargo and therefore wanting to be kept up to date in real time with the status of the cargo, there are telematics lock solutions available. For a trailer, this could be a lock with extra (infrared) sensors and alarms on the inside, such as the SBS INLOCK. For a container, this could be an SBS e-container lock with trackers on the cargo. This allows you to prove afterwards that no one has interfered with the cargo, thereby preventing the damage incurred on account of a cargo being refused.

## Which lock do I need?

The diagram below shows what the different lock solutions can do when it comes to following the Code of Practice.

	Driver, Seal or mechanical lock	Lock with registration functionality		Electronical Lock with SIM-card and portal at home base with access control system (compliant to Code of Practise)	
	Manually (driver)	Manually	Automatically	Manually	Automatically
<b>Load immediately after completion - check for:</b>					
Exterior / sail	x	x			x
Loafers	x	x			x
Close or seal cargo	x		x		x
Tilt cords and straps connected	x	x			x
Good quality lifting cords and straps	x	x			x
Unique seal number	x		x		x
<b>At stopover, cargo transfer, new driver</b>					
Loafers	x	x			x
Close or seal cargo	x		x		x
<b>Before unboarding UK / immigration control</b>					
Tilt cords and straps	x	x			x
Lock or seal	x		x		x
Sail / exterior	x	x			x
Check external storage areas	x	x			x
Check in the container / trailer (allowed with trackers)	x	x			x



E-Containerlock tracking unit



BDI electronic lock with registration functionality

# Tips when discovering stowaways

TLN stresses that if you suspect or discover stowaways, you shouldn't get out of your vehicle, but rather call the police emergency number straight away. After that, you should also call your company's planner or security manager.

## **Police, fire service, ambulance in the event of an emergency**

Assistance can be sought in urgent situations in virtually all of Europe on

**112**

## **Calais and Northern France in an emergency**

Call the police emergency number by mobile phone on

**117**

## **Non-emergency**

Call the Dutch police on

**0900 8844**

or from abroad

**(0031) 343 57 8844**

## **Report Crime Anonymous**

Report free crimes anonymously on

**0800 7000**

### **Notify the authorities**

Furthermore, a driver will often believe that all illegal immigrants have left his vehicle, but on inspection, it will often become apparent that a number have nevertheless been left behind in the lorry. Even in these cases, TLN advises notifying the authorities about the suspicion that there are illegal immigrants in the vehicle.

### **Reporting forms**

In addition, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee has developed reporting forms for drivers in twenty different languages. If a driver sees that illegal immigrants are trying to climb into a lorry, he can report that to TLN and/or the transport company using one of these forms. TLN will then pass it on to the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee.

**Colophon**

This whitepaper is a publication by Imbema Transport & Logistics in collaboration with TLN, the Dutch branch organisation for the transport and logistics sector.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without the explicit permission of Imbema.

+31 (0)88 - 130 67 80  
sbs@imbema.com  
www.imbema.com/sbs

**Sources**

TLN / BDU  
NOS  
AD  
TROUW  
EenVandaag  
The Royal Netherlands Marechaussee

