PN - Pallet network terminology

Understand frequently used terminology in pallet networks. These terms are typically used across all the networks; some of the more specific terms will be shown in the related network articles.

Updated October 27, 2025

Pallet networks use some distinctive language that might be new to users who are unfamiliar with how the networks operate. This article gives a general overview of some frequently used terms. These terms are likely to appear across different pallet networks.

Member

A **Member** is a local carrier that belongs to a pallet network. Each member is assigned a defined set of ZIP codes and is responsible for pickups and deliveries within that area. Members operate under shared service standards and contribute to the wider national coverage of the network.

Terminal

A **Terminal** is a member's operating facility used for:

- Local **pickups and deliveries**
- **Cross-dock** operations between trunk vehicles and local distribution runs

Pallet networks also use:

- **Requesting terminal** - creates and submits the shipment to the network and 'owns' the job commercially. It may or may not take part in the pickup or delivery.
- **Pickup terminal** - terminal assigned by the network to perform the pickup in the origin ZIP code/zone, and the trunking to the hub.
- **Delivery terminal** - terminal responsible for the final delivery in the destination area.

Hub

The **Hub** is the central transshipment site where trunk vehicles from all terminals converge, typically overnight.
At the hub, pallets are:

- **Unloaded**,
- **Sorted**,
- **Reloaded** onto outbound trunks bound for the relevant destination terminals.

Hub codes and schedules are used to control trunk routing and timing.

Gazetteer

The **Gazetteer** is the network's official ZIP code map. It defines:

- Which **terminal** serves each ZIP code area,
- The corresponding **hub** routing, and
- Rating or zoning rules.

Some form of gazetteer is used to automatically allocate shipments, generate correct routing labels, and ensure accurate billing.

Trunking

Trunking refers to the nightly **linehaul movements** between terminals and hubs.
These runs often follow **fixed schedules** and **defined lanes**, for example:

- Terminal → Hub (inbound trunk)
- Hub → Terminal (outbound trunk)

Service level

A **Service level** represents the **agreed transit promise**, such as:

- **Next day**
- **Economy**
- **Dedicated day**

Each pallet network may use unique service codes. These must be mapped correctly to ensure that service performance and rating are recorded accurately.

Shipment

A **Shipment** is the end-to-end shipment record, and will typically include:

- One or more **pallets**,
- Associated **labels**, and
- All relevant **documentation** (e.g., pickup receipts, delivery instructions, ePODs).

The shipment reference provides the central link between operational, financial, and tracking data.

Labels

Labels are barcoded identifiers issued according to network rules. They contain:

- Routing information (hub and terminal codes),
- Service level details, and
- Shipment references.

All pallet movements must carry a compliant label to enable network scanning, sorting, and tracking.

Scan status

A **Scan status** represents a key **track-and-trace event** during the shipment lifecycle, such as:

- Picked up
- Inbound to hub

- Outbound from hub
- At terminal
- Out for delivery
- Delivered
- Alerts

These update automatically through network integrations or manual scans, providing full visibility of pallet progress.

Self-billing

Self-billing automates financial reconciliation between members and the network.
Charges are calculated using:

- Network **rate cards**,
- **Surcharges**
- Required **paperwork or scan events**.

This process ensures that invoices align exactly with network billing standards and audit requirements.

Proof of delivery (POD)

- **POD** - Proof of delivery captures **delivery confirmation**, often including a **signature.**
- **ePOD –** Electronic proof of delivery **(ePOD)** captures **delivery confirmation**, often including a **signature**, **timestamp**, and **photo evidence**. Depending on the network setup, this may:
  - Retrieve ePODs automatically from the network feed
  - Upload local ePODs for synchronization to the central system
- **COP** - Customer own paperwork is a customer-specific proof of delivery (POD) that is signed.
- **Delivery images** - photos associated with the final delivery event that serve as proof of delivery and condition. Examples include:
  - Photo of pallets at the site or loading bay
  - Close-up of labels/barcodes on pallets
  - Condition/damage photos if issues are found
  - Paperwork photos accompanying the POD

Last mile delivery

The shipment is received at the terminal from the hub and loaded onto a vehicle for delivery to the final destination.

Portal

Each pallet network operates from its own custom, centralized operating system. Integrations into these systems optimize operating efficiency for both the carrier and the network, offering enhanced communication and visibility between systems.

Implants

Pallet network implants are orders created in the network portal where the requesting terminal is the customer's own terminal. These orders are then imported into Qargo, allowing the customer to have full visibility of all their orders in one central location