Getting started with Qargo: what it is, how it works, and key terminology

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What is Qargo?

Qargo is an intelligent, cloud-based transportation management system (TMS) designed for carriers, freight forwarders, and 3PLs. It helps logistics companies manage their entire transportation operation from a single platform, from the moment an order is received, through planning and operations, all the way to billing.

Qargo supports all types of road transportation, including:

- General freight
- Groupage (LTL/partial truckloads)
- Container and intermodal transportation
- Freight forwarding
- Full truckload (FTL)

Who is Qargo for?

Qargo is built for teams across the transportation business:

- **Operations teams and planners:** build loads, assign resources, track operations
- **Customer service:** manage orders, communicate updates, handle issues
- **Finance and admin:** review charges, create invoices, manage contract carrier costs
- **Drivers:** receive jobs, complete stops, upload PODs via the driver mobile app
- **Management:** reporting, performance overview, P&L per load

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Qargo structure at a glance

There are 2 aspects to Qargo:

Section	What it covers
Setup	Configuration: customers, rate cards, transportation services, resources, users, integrations
Workflow	Day-to-day operations: orders, planning, loads, billing

📚 Most users spend the majority of their time in the **Workflow** section. The **Setup** section is typically configured once during onboarding and updated occasionally.

Key terminology

Before starting with Qargo, it helps to understand the core building blocks:

📦 Order

An order is a delivery task requested by a customer, typically including a pickup and a drop-off.

- Represents the **complete movement of goods from origin to destination**.
- An order is the revenue-generating unit: it belongs to a customer and has a price attached.
- Also called a "job" in some markets (particularly the UK and Ireland).

🚛 Load

A load is how one or more orders are carried out in **operations**.

- It represents a vehicle journey with specific resources assigned (driver, truck, trailer)
- Multiple orders can be grouped into one load.
- A load is the **cost unit**: it's where drivers, vehicles, and contract carriers are assigned.

> 📚 Key distinction: an **order** = revenue (what the customer is charged). A **load** = cost (what it costs to run).

📬 Shipment

The goods being transported as part of an order. This includes freight details such as weight, volume, number of pallets, and packaging type.

🔗 Stage / leg

A stage (also called a leg) is a **portion of an order**: one segment of the overall transportation journey. Orders can be split into multiple stages, e.g.:

- Pickup stage
- Linehaul stage
- Delivery stage

Each stage can be assigned to a different load and carried out by different resources (e.g., the company fleet for linehaul, a contract carrier for final mile).

🛑 Stop

A stop is a **physical location** where an action takes place during a load: loading, unloading, waiting, customs, etc.

👷 Resource

Resources are the assets used to run loads: **drivers, vehicles, and trailers**.

🤝 Contract carrier

A contract carrier is an external carrier or driver assigned to carry out part (or all) of an order that the company fleet cannot cover. Qargo has a dedicated carrier portal where contract carriers can view jobs and upload documents directly.

✅ POD (proof of delivery)

A signed confirmation that a delivery was completed. Drivers can upload PODs directly through the Qargo driver mobile app. Similar to a CMR in road freight.

📋 Task

Tasks in Qargo are specific actions that need to be completed as part of an order or load workflow, for example: *upload CMR*, *send self-bill*, *approve invoice*, *collect POD*. Tasks make it clear who needs to do what, and when.

The Qargo workflow: from order to invoice

Here is how a typical transportation job flows through Qargo, from start to finish.

📥 Order capture

Orders can be created in Qargo in several ways:

- **Manually:** entered directly by the team
- **Templates:** reusable order templates for repeat customers or routes
- **Import:** via file upload (CSV/Excel), EDI, API, or automated email reading (Qargo Intelligence)
- **Quotes:** converted from a quote into a confirmed order

Each order includes: customer, pickup address, delivery address, shipment details (weight, pallets, etc.), transportation service, and rating.

🗂️ Planning

Once an order is in the system, it appears on the **planning board**, Qargo's interactive dispatch tool. From here, planners can:

- Drag and drop orders onto vehicles/drivers
- Create loads manually or let Qargo suggest optimized runs
- Combine multiple orders into one load
- Split orders across multiple loads or legs
- Assign contract carriers
- Set delivery time slots

The planning board shows all available resources (drivers and vehicles) and their current assignments at a glance.

📱 Operations

Once a load is planned, the driver can receive the job on the **Qargo driver mobile app**. During the load, drivers can:

- See their stops and route
- Mark stops as picked up or delivered
- Upload PODs, CMRs, and other documents
- Log wait time, alerts, and incidents

Qargo tracks the load in real time, updating the status of each order automatically.

🔍 Review and approval

After delivery, orders move to **"Delivered"** status. Before billing, the team can review:

- Whether the correct charges were applied
- Whether a POD/CMR has been uploaded
- Any adjustments needed (wait time, extras, etc.)

Qargo Intelligence can automatically read and validate uploaded documents against the order data, flagging mismatches.

🧾 Billing

Once reviewed and approved, orders move through the billing workflow:

1. Mark as **Ready to invoice** (per order, or in bulk)
2. **Create invoice:** consolidate one or more orders per invoice
3. **Send to customer:** as a PDF or directly to the accounting system
4. **Send to accounting:** push to the connected accounting tool (e.g., Exact, Sage, QuickBooks)

Qargo also handles:

- **Carrier invoices** for contract carriers
- **Self-billing:** automatically generating invoices on behalf of contract carriers
- **Credit memos** for corrections
- **Pallet network billing:** for customers on networks such as TPN, Palletways, etc.

What can Qargo integrate with?

Qargo connects to a wide range of external systems:

- **Accounting:** Exact, Sage, QuickBooks, and more
- **Telematics / FMS:** live vehicle tracking
- **Pallet networks:** Palletline, TPN, Pallex, Parceline, and others
- **WMS / ERP systems:** via API or EDI
- **Port community systems:** Portbase, Destin8 (for container operations)
- **Customer portals:** give customers live visibility of their shipments