
DHL embarks on sustainable long-haul shipping with natural gas powered trucks

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DHL Freight has purchased four Liquefied Natural Gas powered Stralis trucks from IVECO in Belgium.

These heavy-duty, long-haul trucks have a driving range of up to 1,500 kilometers and enable a total weight of tractor and trailer of up to 40 tons. With this purchase, DHL Freight is bringing environmentally friendly transport to its long-haul road freight.

The trucks will be employed to create a sustainable transport solution for one of the world's largest developers and sellers of athletic footwear and sportswear.

“As an excellent long-haul alternative to diesel, natural gas provides a great opportunity for DHL Freight to become front runner in sustainable road freight shipping,” said Uwe Brinks, CEO DHL Freight.

“It offers the chance to reduce greenhouse gas and particulate matter emissions, in addition to benefits such as noise reduction and cost savings. With IVECO's natural gas powered trucks, we can now provide customers with additional options for environmentally friendly long-distance transport and further contribute to DHL's GoGreen environmental goals.”

With the group strategy in mind, to reduce all logistics-related emissions net to zero by 2050, DHL Freight was inspired to purchase the tractors as a way to expand its current service offering for the global sporting-goods manufacturer. The customer himself is ambitiously working on minimizing his environmental footprint by focusing on energy, chemistry, water and waste in its entire supply chain. A sustainable transport solution to foster the partnership was, therefore, the next logical step.

The option to choose sustainable shipping has evolved in the last two decades, growing from a niche market mostly confined to local urban solutions to now being cost-effective and implementable for heavy loads over long distances. The trucks purchased by DHL Freight meet the strict Euro 6 emissions standards, making them an excellent choice for future operations.

The IVECO Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG-) powered Stralis provides substantial

advantages that make it a sensible investment for the future. Compared to diesel, the use of liquid natural gas reduces particulate matter emissions by 99 percent and nitrogen dioxide by 96 percent. CO₂ is reduced by up to 10 percent and can be even reduced up to 95 percent by using bio methane. As for noise pollution, vehicles using natural gas produce up to 50 percent less noise than diesel vehicles. In addition to these clear environmental benefits, liquid natural gas provides economic benefits, due to its lower cost.

Pursuing sustainability is a top priority for the group, as evidenced by the GoGreen program. The use of vehicles with alternative drives and technologies plays an important role in this regard, which is why DHL is testing and implementing various concepts worldwide.

For instance, DHL Freight's recent sustainability measures also include the purchase of two all-electric FUSO eCanter trucks for shorter distances around Berlin.

In addition to these new types of drives, other emissions-reducing strategies such as truck superstructures that save fuel and therefore reduce emissions are being used as well. These include the aerodynamic teardrop trailer, which has a drop-shaped roof to reduce air resistance, thereby reducing fuel consumption by 6% to 10% over conventional heavy trucks. DHL Freight has been using the teardrop trailer in its transport operations in Germany, France and the Benelux countries since 2014.

The 4×2 tractors from IVECO contain two Liquefied Natural Gas tanks that provide a driving range of up to 1,500 kilometers. The engine has 400 horsepower or 1,700 Newton meters, which is only slightly lower than diesel, which has 450 horsepower or 2,100 Newton meters. Nearly all of the regular features of the conventional IVECO Stralis, such as automated or manual transmission, are available in the LNG-powered model.