



# Streamlining Operations with Cutting-Edge Terminal Automation Systems

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Terminals aren't just a cost center anymore — they've evolved into an integral stop in the fuel supply chain and are a place of tremendous operational and inventory complexity. As such, control and visibility into terminal operations are more important than ever. Compliance, credit checks, product allocations, and inventory must all be closely managed to help protect profitability, safety, and efficiency.

Although terminal automation systems (TAS) have been in use for years, they need to evolve to keep pace with changes in terminal operations relating to complexity, regulatory burdens, customer service, and data sharing. A next-generation TAS can overcome these issues and help take terminals to a new level of operational excellence.

However, not all TAS are created equal. The following is a discussion of the features and capabilities you need to drive maximum visibility and control — and that you should look for as you procure a next-generation TAS.

## Bottom-line benefits

By knowing what to look for in a next-generation TAS, you can gain the capabilities you need to inform decisions that provide considerable return on your investment, such as:

- Faster truck loading and increased throughput
- Better demand management
- Reduced inventory risks
- Instant inventory views in tight supply situations
- Access to information for trend analysis
- Improved driver interaction

## Real-time inventory management

Because of high volatility in current commodity markets, it is crucial that you know how much of each product is in your tanks at all times. With a cutting-edge TAS, you can:

- See and manage your inventory in real time — by tank, product, owner, or exchange partner — with color-coded displays and an easy-to-use tracking interface
- Support a large number of tank gauging solutions and enable fast, easy set-up
- Get an at-a-glance snapshot of terminal activity at each lane to monitor current lifting activity and help forecast demand for daily hedge balancing
- Automatically pause lifting across all lanes at a set time to capture tank gauges, calculate inventory, and distribute reports to key players
- Instantly allocate gains and losses at close to simplify your reconciliations

## Advanced lifting controls

The faster you can load trucks and the more trucks you can move in and out of a facility, the more profitable you can be. With a quality TAS, you can:

- Apply lifting controls across a matrix of variables, including shipper, customer, driver, carrier, product, and terminal
- Interface with third-party credit and allocation vendors so that only authorized personnel are allowed access to the terminal
- Ensure compliance with government access regulations affecting your terminal, such as the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program

## Advanced reporting and analysis

Why collect terminal data if you can't analyze, manipulate, and report on it? Your TAS should provide a range of standard reports with multiple filtering options, as well as the flexibility to create your own reports based on the information available.

An advanced TAS offers:

- Easy-to-read inventory, bill of lading, database, muster, administration, and configuration reports
- The ability to create custom reports that show activity detail, track movements, compare volumes, and more — and transfer that information to Microsoft Excel or another system for further analysis
- The ability to automatically generate and distribute reports via email, printers, or FTP based on your criteria and set intervals

All the bells and whistles in the world can't make up for a software provider that doesn't truly understand your pain points and the bigger picture in the ever-changing fuels industry. Make sure your vendor can demonstrate an understanding of your needs and market trends. Also, be sure they have a successful track record of helping companies make decisions that can elevate their customer service, increase efficiencies, and cut operational costs.

Cutting-edge TAS are poised to meet the growing needs of today's terminal operations, enabling decisions and actions that can:

- Increase control and visibility to accurately and securely meet demand
- Help you load trucks faster and potentially boost throughput
- Reduce inventory risks and improve customer service and driver interaction — particularly when supply is tight
- Support trend analysis, helping minimize risks and chart a more profitable course

# Need a cutting-edge TAS?

We have one. Visit with a DTN Guardian3<sup>®</sup> expert.

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