

Version 03

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Guide on cabotage operations

This guide contains a description of the rules on cabotage operations in Regulation No. 1072/2009 on common rules for access to the international road haulage market,¹ as well as the Executive Order on Freight Transport,² and the Executive Order on Conditions for the Performance of Cabotage, the initial or final legs of combined transport and non-bilateral international transport.³

The guide replaces the Danish Road Traffic Authority's previous guide on cabotage operations and is based on the previous interpretations but is supplemented with guidance on the rules for cabotage operations that follow from amending regulation 1055/2020 of 15th July 2020. The guide is addressed to operators in the road haulage sector and is an expression of the Danish Road Traffic Authority's interpretation of the rules. Any final decision on interpretation will fall within the jurisdiction of the courts.

The guide is based on relevant interpretations and will be updated as new interpretative aids are received for the application of the rules, including from the EU Commission, the European Court of Justice and the Danish courts.

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¹ Regulation (EC) No.1072/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21st October 2009 on common rules for access to the international road haulage market. The Regulation will hereinafter be referred to as "Regulation No. 1072/2009".

² Executive Order no. 522 of 21st May 2025 on road haulage.

³ Executive Order no. 908 of 25th June 2025 on conditions for the performance of cabotage, the initial or final leg of combined transport and non-bilateral international transport.

1. What is cabotage?

Cabotage is defined as national transport for hire or reward, which is carried out for a limited period of time in a host Member State in accordance with the Regulation.⁴

A cabotage operation is defined as a national transport of goods from loading of the goods to unloading at the consignee or consignees listed in the consignment note/ notes. A cabotage operation can therefore consist of either several loading points or several unloading points.⁵

2. Special requirements for international transport

International transport operations are transports from one Member State or a third country to another Member State or third country, with or without transit through one or more Member States or one or more third countries. Prior international transport is a precondition for cabotage operations.⁶

Examples of international transport operations giving access to the performing of cabotage operations in Denmark:

a) a laden journey undertaken by a vehicle from the point of departure in a Member State to the point of arrival in another Member State, with or without transit through one or more Member States or third countries.

Example: *A German truck driving goods from Belgium to Denmark.*

b) a laden journey undertaken by a vehicle from a Member State to a third country or vice versa, with or without transit through one or more Member States or third countries.

Example: *A Belgian truck driving goods from Russia to Denmark.*

c) a laden journey undertaken by a vehicle between third countries, with transit through the territory of one or more Member States.

Example: *A Spanish truck transporting goods from Morocco to Russia via Spain, France, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Finland.*

An international transport operation thus always presupposes that the vehicle is loaded with goods during the international transport, that it is a cross-border transport operation and that a Member State is either the transit country and/or the country of dispatch or recipient country.

2.a Concluded international transport

It is a requirement for cabotage that the prior international transport has been terminated. If the international transport has several unloading points according to several consignment notes, cabotage can only be started after the last unloading.⁷

The international transport that precedes the cabotage operation must be of such a nature that it is not primarily intended to circumvent the cabotage rules. Thus, an international transport does not provide access to cabotage if it is not a real transport operation.

3. Requirement for real transport

The transport of empty containers and returnable packaging (pallets, flower transport stands or similar) into Denmark does not provide access to legally carry out cabotage if the transport of the empty containers and returnable packaging are not a “*real transport*”.⁸

⁴ Article 2(6) of Regulation No.1072/2009.

⁵ Article 2(6) and 8(2) of Regulation No. 1072/2009.

⁶ Article 2(2) (a) to (d) and Article 8(2) of Regulation No.1072/2009.

⁷ Art. 8(2) of Regulation No.1072/2009.

⁸ Executive Order no. 522 of 21st May 2025 on road haulage Section 31 and Regulation No. 1072/2009, Article 8(2).

Example of a real transport operation	Example of a non-real transport operation
A German truck transporting an empty container from Hamburg (DE) to Esbjerg. There is a consignment note for the transport where the container is either the subject of the transport agreement or forms an integral part thereof.	A German truck transporting an empty container from Hamburg (DE) to Esbjerg. No separate payment has been agreed for the transport.

4. Special requirements for cabotage operations

Foreign transport operator's transport of empty containers, empty semi-trailers, and returnable packaging (pallets, flower transport stands or similar) in Denmark, which are transported according to a transport contract and are the main subject of the freight agreement and/or payment, is considered as transportation of goods and thus counts as cabotage operations.

Transport of empty containers, empty semi-trailers, and returnable packaging (pallets, flower transport stands or similar) that constitute an integral part of a freight agreement and/or occur as an accessory to a preceding or subsequent cabotage operation does not count as a separate cabotage operation but is instead linked to a cabotage operation or an international transport. This requires documentation, for example, through the freight document or its annotations. If the context is not clear, the default assumption is that it counts as a separate cabotage operation.

Example 1:

Sequence of events: a Dutch truck performs an international transport of tulips from Groningen (NL) to Ribe, where the tulips are unloaded. Subsequently, 50 empty flower transport stands are loaded onto the same vehicle, which then drives to Esbjerg to commence a cabotage operation. In Esbjerg, all the empty flower transport stands are delivered to the customer, after which 50 flower transport stands filled with flowers are loaded and transported to Holstebro, where the stands are unloaded. Following the unloading, 50 empty flower transport stands are again loaded at the customer's premises and transported back to the Netherlands.

Assessment of the transport: if the transport operator can demonstrate that the collection of the 50 empty flower transport stands in Ribe forms part of a return system between the companies prior to a cabotage operation from Esbjerg to Holstebro, the transport from Ribe to Esbjerg and on to Holstebro is considered to constitute a single cabotage operation. Thus, only one cabotage operation is deemed to have taken place. It is essential that the transport operator can document the link between the cabotage operation and the collection of the 50 empty flower transport stands.

Example 2:

Sequence of events: a German truck performs an international transport of fruit from Hamburg (DE) to Odense, where the fruit is unloaded at the customer's main address. At the customer's warehouse outside Odense, 52 return pallets are subsequently loaded onto the same vehicle, which then drives to Nyborg to commence a cabotage operation. In Nyborg, the return pallets are delivered, and the vehicle is loaded with 48 pallets of fruit, which are transported to Næstved, where the fruit is unloaded. From Næstved, the truck returns to Hamburg (DE) unladen (empty journey).

Assessment of the transport: if the transport operator can demonstrate that the collection of the 52 return pallets at the warehouse outside Odense forms part of a return system between the companies prior to a cabotage operation from Nyborg to Næstved, the transport from Odense to Nyborg and on to Næstved is considered to constitute a single cabotage operation. It is not decisive whether the pallets are exchanged on a 1:1 basis or at the same location. However, it is essential that the transport operator can document the link between the cabotage operation and the collection of the 52 return pallets. Furthermore, the collection must be a natural part of the transport route.

Example 3:

Sequence of events: a German truck performs an international transport of furniture from Flensburg (DE) to Aarhus, where the furniture is unloaded. The truck then drives unladen to Herning to commence a cabotage operation. In Herning, 40 pallets of furniture and 10 return pallets are loaded onto the same vehicle, which is then driven to Skanderborg, where the pallets of furniture and 5 of the return pallets are unloaded. The truck then continues to Horsens, where the remaining 5 return pallets are delivered, and 35 pallets of tools are subsequently loaded. From Horsens, the truck performs an international transport back to Flensburg (DE).

Assessment of the transport: the collection of the 10 return pallets in Herning forms part of a return system between the companies in connection with a cabotage operation from Herning to Skanderborg. The collected return pallets are delivered in Skanderborg and Horsens respectively, but they are linked to the same cabotage operation. The transport from Herning to Skanderborg and on to Horsens constitutes a single cabotage operation. It is essential that the transport operator can document the link between the cabotage operation and the collection of the 10 return pallets.

Example 4:

Sequence of events: a Polish truck performs an international transport of meat from Poznan (PL) to a grocery store in Grindsted, where the meat is unloaded. Subsequently, 50 empty flower transport stands are loaded onto the same vehicle, which then drives to Vejle. At the customer's premises in Vejle, the empty flower transport stands are delivered, and 49 flower transport stands filled with flowers are then loaded. From Vejle, the truck performs an international transport back to Poznan (PL).

Assessment of the transport: the collection of the 50 empty flower transport stands forms part of a return system between the companies in connection with an international transport from Poznan (PL) to Grindsted, and prior to a new international transport from Vejle to Poznan (PL). It is essential that the transport operator can document the link between the international transport and the collection of the 50 empty flower transport stands.

Example 5:

Sequence of events: a German truck with trailer enters Denmark unladen and is permitted to perform one cabotage operation within 3 days, in accordance with the 3-day rule set out in section 6a. The following day, the vehicle drives from Padborg to Holstebro with the empty trailer. At the customer's premises in Holstebro, the empty trailer is exchanged for another trailer which the customer has pre-loaded with goods. The truck then performs a cabotage operation with the loaded trailer from Holstebro to Padborg.

Assessment of the transport: the exchange of the empty trailer for a loaded trailer is considered a practical arrangement that serves as an alternative to the driver waiting while the goods are being loaded by the customer. The transport of the empty trailer from Padborg to Holstebro is regarded as an accessory part of the subsequent cabotage operation from Holstebro, and the transport does not constitute an independent cabotage operation. However, it is always subject to a case-by-case assessment whether the transport of empty containers, empty semi-trailers, and returnable packaging is sufficiently documented as being linked to a cabotage operation or an international transport.

It should be noted that the transport of empty containers, empty semi-trailers, and returnable packaging in connection with an international transport to Denmark is not considered cabotage. For example, if a container with goods is transported from Germany to Denmark, the empty container can be transported to the destination after unloading the goods from the international transport, as per the freight agreement.

5. Who are the cabotage rules applicable to?

The cabotage rules apply to the specific vehicle or, in case of a coupled combination of vehicles, the motor vehicle thereof, which carries out transport services for hire or reward between two points in a Member State other than the Member State in which the company is established.

Inbound international transport and cabotage operations must be carried out by the same vehicle or, in the case of a coupled combination of vehicles, the motor vehicle thereof.⁹

The cabotage rules apply to transport operators from the following EU and EEA countries:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

6. Rules for cabotage operations

6a. Time limitation

The 7-day rule

In connection with an incoming international transport, up to 3 cabotage operations may be undertaken within 7 days following delivery of all goods transported during the incoming international transport operation. Hence, the last cabotage operation must be completed within 7 days.

- The 7 days are understood as calendar days.¹⁰
 - The start time is calculated from 00.00 on the day after the completion of the last unloading of the goods transported by the inbound international transport operation.
 - If the unloading takes place at 12.00 on 1st January, the 7 days thus start from 00.00 on the night between the 1st and the 2nd of January.
- The last unloading in connection with the last cabotage operation must be completed no later than 23:59 on the 7th day.

It should be noted that cabotage operations may be commenced immediately after the termination of the inbound international transport operation. Hence, international transport and cabotage may be performed on the same day.

Example:

- Unloading of goods in connection with an international transport ends at 12:00, Monday, January 1st.
- The 7-day period starts at 00:00 hrs. on the night between Monday and Tuesday.
- The last cabotage operation must be terminated by Monday, January 8th at 23:59.

Example 2:

A German truck transports fruit from Hamburg (DE) to Esbjerg. Unloading of the fruit in connection with the international transport is concluded on Monday 1st January.

Date	Course of events	Characterization of the transport
Monday, January 1st at 12:00	Unloading of fruit in Esbjerg	International transport
Same day at 12:30	Meat is loaded in Esbjerg for transport to Odense	First cabotage operation
Monday 1st January/ Tuesday 2nd January	The 7-day period starts at 00:00 hrs. on the night between Monday and Tuesday	7-day period

⁹ Art. 8(2) of Regulation No.1072/2009.

¹⁰ Art. 3(1) cf. (2) (b) of Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom) No. 1182/71 of 3rd June 1971 determining the rules applicable to periods, dates and time limits. Furthermore, see section 6d.

From Tuesday, January 2nd through Tuesday, January 9th	The 7-day period expires on Tuesday 9 th January at 23:59	The last cabotage operation must be concluded before 23:59
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The 3-day rule

- If driving into Denmark without cargo in connection with an international transport concluded in another Member State, a single cabotage operation may be carried out with the vehicle within 3 days of entry into Denmark.
 - This cabotage operation must also be concluded no later than the 7th day after the goods transported by international transport by the vehicle in question have been delivered. This applies regardless in which Member State the international transport is concluded.
 - The 3 days are understood as calendar days.¹¹
 - The start time is calculated from 00.00 on the day after the vehicle has entered the host Member State unladen.
 - The last unloading in connection with this single cabotage operation must be concluded no later than 23.59 on the 3rd day.

Example:

A German truck transports fruit from Hamburg (DE) to Malmö (SE). Unloading of the fruit in connection with the international transport is concluded on 1st January in Sweden. The vehicle then drives to Denmark to perform a single cabotage operation.

Date	Course of events	Characterization of the transport
Monday, 1st January	The vehicle unloads the fruit in Malmö (SE)	The international transport is concluded
Tuesday, 2nd January	The vehicle drives (unladen) to Esbjerg. Furniture is loaded here, of which 1/3 is unloaded in Aalborg	First part of a single cabotage operation
Wednesday, 3rd January	The next 1/3 of the furniture is unloaded in Odense	Second part of the cabotage operation
Thursday, 4th January	The driver rests in Nyborg	Rest
Friday, 5th January*	The remaining 1/3 of the furniture is unloaded in Padborg	Third part of the cabotage operation

- The 7-day period starts at 00:00 hrs. on the night between Monday and Tuesday.
- The 3-day period starts at 00:00 hrs. on the night between Tuesday and Wednesday.

*The vehicle must have concluded the last unloading in connection with the cabotage operation no later than Friday 5th January at 23:59.

Example 2:

A German truck transports fruit from Hamburg (DE) to Helsinki (FI). Unloading of the fruit in connection with the international transport is concluded on 1st January at 12.00 in Finland.

Date	Course of events	Characterization of the transport
Monday, 1st January	The vehicle unloads the fruit in Helsinki (FI)	The international transport is concluded
Tuesday, 2nd January	The vehicle drives (unladen) through Sweden and to Copenhagen. Here, furniture is loaded	Transit through Sweden and cabotage in Denmark begins

¹¹ Ibid.

Wednesday, 3rd January	Night between Tuesday and Wednesday (00.00 hours)	3-day period starts in DK
Wednesday 3rd January/ Thursday 4th January	The driver rests in Odense	Rest
Friday, 5th January	The vehicle drives to Padborg where the furniture is unloaded	The cabotage operation is concluded within the 3-day period (Friday at 23:59)

When the 3-day and/or 7-day period expires, there is in principle no requirement for the vehicle to return to the Member State of establishment or leave the host Member State. Consequently, the foreign vehicle, after performing its third cabotage operation on the 7th day, may stay in Denmark and commence an international transport on the 8th day.¹²

6b. Quantitative limitation 3-journey limit

Within 7 days after the completion of an international transport operation, it is allowed, by use of the same vehicle, to perform a total of 3 cabotage operations. The operator may carry out some or all 3 cabotage operations in the same Member State where the international transport ends or in other Member States, though the said operator may only carry out a single cabotage operation in each of the other Member States within 3 days if the vehicle has entered that particular Member State with an empty load.

Example:

A German truck transports meat in connection with an international transport from Hamburg (DE) – Esbjerg. Immediately afterwards, cabotage is commenced in Denmark.

Course of events	Characterization of the transport
In Esbjerg, furniture is loaded, of which half is carried to Odense	First part of the 1 st cabotage operation
The vehicle carries the remaining half of the furniture to Copenhagen	1st cabotage operation is completed
The vehicle is driven unladen from Copenhagen to Nyborg	Empty journey ¹³
In Nyborg, sportswear is loaded, of which 1/3 is carried to Svendborg	First part of the 2 nd cabotage operation
The vehicle carries the next 1/3 of sportswear to Fredericia	Second part of the 2 nd cabotage operation
The vehicle carries the final 1/3 of sportswear to Kolding	2nd cabotage operation is completed
In Kolding, half of the wagon is loaded with meat	First part of 3rd cabotage operation
In Esbjerg, the other half of the wagon is loaded with wine	Second part of 3rd cabotage operation
In Padborg, both meat and wine are unloaded at the same recipient	3rd cabotage operation is completed

6c. The 4-day rule – Waiting period (cooling off period)

Carriers may not carry out cabotage operations by use of the same vehicle or, in the event of a coupled combination of vehicles, by use of the motor vehicle thereof, in the same host Member State for 4 days from the completion of the last cabotage operation carried out in that Member State.¹⁴

- The 4 days are understood as calendar days.
- The start time for the waiting period is calculated from 00.00 hrs. the day after the vehicle has undertaken the last unloading in connection with its cabotage operation.¹⁵

The waiting period is triggered each time a cabotage operation is completed and if the vehicle leaves Denmark. This also applies even if the vehicle has only performed one cabotage operation.

¹² Art. 8(2), subparagraph 2 of Regulation No.1072/2009.

¹³ In this example, an empty journey is without a trailer or a semi-trailer, and therefore only the motor vehicle.

¹⁴ Article 8(2a) of Regulation No. 1072/2009.

¹⁵ Article 3(1) cf. 2 (b) of Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom) No. 1182/71 of 3rd June 1971 determining the rules applicable to periods, dates and time limits.

Hence, if a foreign vehicle performs one cabotage operation in Denmark in connection with an international transport operation and then performs one cabotage operation in Sweden¹⁶, the said vehicle may not perform cabotage in Denmark within 4 days following the termination of the cabotage operation in Denmark.

Example 1:

Unloading of goods from the last cabotage operation takes place on Monday 1st January at 12:00.

- Thus, the 4 days start at 00:00 hrs. on the night between Monday and Tuesday.
- The waiting period expires on Friday 5th January at 23.59.
- Cabotage can be started again at the earliest at 00.00 hrs between Friday and Saturday 6th January.

Example 2:

A German truck concludes an international transport from Hamburg (DE) – Padborg on Monday 1st January at 10:00. The same vehicle performs a cabotage operation from Padborg – Esbjerg. The vehicle then performs an international transport from Esbjerg – Malmö (SE).

Date	Course of events	Characterization of the transport
Monday, 1st January	The vehicle unloads fruit in Padborg	Conclusion of the international transport to Denmark
Same day	The vehicle transports cheese from Padborg – Esbjerg	First cabotage operation
Same day	The vehicle then transports meat from Esbjerg – Malmö (SE)	International transport
Monday 1st January/ Tuesday 2nd January	The waiting period starts at 00:00 hrs. on the night between Monday and Tuesday.	The waiting period in Denmark starts
Tuesday 2nd January through Saturday 6th January	The waiting period expires on Friday at 23:59 hrs. and cabotage is allowed again from Saturday 6 th January after 00:00 hrs.	The waiting period expires

Example 3:

A German truck transports fruit from Hamburg (DE) to Esbjerg. Unloading of fruit takes place on Friday, 1st March, which concludes the international transport. Three cabotage operations are then carried out in Denmark. The third cabotage operation in Denmark is terminated on Monday 4th March, after which the truck leaves Denmark. The same truck transports fruit from Hamburg (DE) to Esbjerg and a new cabotage operation is commenced after the completion of the waiting period.

Date	Course of events	Characterization of the transport
Friday, 1st March	The vehicle unloads fruit in Esbjerg	Conclusion of the international transport to Denmark
Saturday, 2nd March	Carriage of furniture from Esbjerg to Aarhus	First cabotage operation
Sunday, 3rd March	Carriage of building supplies from Horsens to Odense	Second cabotage operation
Monday, 4th March	Carriage of sportswear from Slagelse to Kolding	Third cabotage operation
Monday, 4th March/ Tuesday, 5th March	The vehicle leaves Denmark after termination of the cabotage operation. The	The waiting period begins

¹⁶ The waiting period in Sweden may begin on a different date than in Denmark; it depends on when the cabotage operation is terminated in the member countries in question.

	waiting period starts at 00:00 hrs. on the night between Monday and Tuesday	
Friday, 8th March	The same truck carries fruit from Hamburg (DE) to Esbjerg	International transport
Friday, 8th March/ Saturday, 9th March	The waiting period expires on Friday at 23:59 and cabotage is allowed again from Saturday after 00:00 hrs.	The waiting period expires
Saturday, 9th March	Carriage of furniture from Esbjerg to Aarhus	Cabotage operation

Example 4:

A German truck carries fruit from Hamburg (DE) to Esbjerg. Unloading of fruit takes place on 21st February and, thereby, the international transport operation is terminated. The driver rests in Esbjerg between Friday and Saturday, when the first cabotage operation is commenced in Esbjerg on Saturday the 22nd of February.

Date	Course of events	Characterization of the transport
Saturday, 22nd February	In Esbjerg, furniture is loaded and carried to Odense	First cabotage operation in Denmark
Same day	The vehicle drives unladen to Malmö (SE), where fruit is loaded and carried to Stockholm (SE)	Empty journey and first cabotage operation in Sweden
Saturday 22nd February/ Sunday, 23rd February	The waiting period starts at 00:00 hrs. on the night between Saturday and Sunday	Waiting period in Denmark
Monday, 24th February	In Stockholm (SE), cheese is loaded, then carried to Oslo (NO)	International transport
Tuesday, 25th February	The vehicle drives from Oslo (NO) (unladen) to Esbjerg. Here, rest is taken	Empty journey ¹⁷ and rest
Wednesday, 26th February	Rest continues. The vehicle is subject to the waiting period, which ends at 23:59	Rest
Thursday, 27th February	Meat is loaded in Esbjerg (at 00:01), carried to Odense and unloaded	First cabotage operation in Denmark, after completed waiting period

Example 5:

A German truck carries furniture from Hamburg (DE) to Esbjerg. Unloading of furniture takes place on Saturday, 22nd February, which concludes the international transport. A cabotage operation begins in Denmark on the same day.

Date	Course of events	Characterization of the transport
Saturday, 22nd February	In Esbjerg, the furniture is unloaded and, thereby, the international transport operation is terminated	International transport
Same day	Cheese is loaded in Esbjerg for carriage to Odense	First cabotage operation
Sunday, 23rd February	In Odense, fruit is loaded for carriage to Padborg	Second cabotage operation

¹⁷ In this example, an empty journey is without a trailer or a semi-trailer and, therefore, the motor vehicle only.

Monday, 24th February	In Padborg, meat is loaded for carriage to Ribe	Third cabotage operation
Tuesday, 25th February	The waiting period starts at 00:00 hrs. on the night between Monday and Tuesday	The waiting period begins
Tuesday, 25th February – Friday, 28th February	The vehicle is subject to the waiting period, which ends on Friday 28 th February at 23:59	The waiting period expires

6d. Special considerations regarding weekends and public holidays

If the last day of any of the aforementioned periods (3-, 7-, or 4-day period) falls on a public holiday, Saturday, or Sunday, the period expires on the next working day.¹⁸

Example: A 3-day period where the period expires on a Sunday.

A transport operator established in the Netherlands carries out an international transport from Amsterdam (NL) to Hamburg (DE) on Thursday, January 6th, followed by a cabotage operation in Denmark.

Date	Course of events	Characterization of the transport
Thursday, 6th January	The driver ends the international transport in Hamburg (DE) and drives unladen to Esbjerg, where fruit is loaded.	First cabotage operation is commenced
Friday, 7th January	1/3 of the fruit is unloaded in Odense	1/3 of first cabotage operation
Saturday, 8th January	1/3 of the fruit is unloaded in Copenhagen	2/3 of first cabotage operation
Sunday, 9th January	3-days period expires (originally) at 23:59. Since it is Sunday, the period ends the following working day.	Rest
Monday, 10th January	1/3 of the fruit is unloaded in Korsør	3/3 of first cabotage operation

Example 2: Waiting period ends on a Saturday.

A transport operator established in Germany carries out an international transport from Hamburg (DE) to Odense on Sunday, January 6th, followed by a cabotage operation in Denmark.

Date	Course of events	Characterization of the transport
Sunday, 6th January	The driver concludes the international transport in Odense. At the same location, fruit is loaded. A rest period is taken until next day.	First cabotage operation is commenced and rest is taken

¹⁸ Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom) No. 1182/71 of 3rd June 1971 determining the rules applicable to periods, dates and time limits.

Monday, 7th January	Fruit is unloaded in Copenhagen. At the same location furniture is loaded.	First cabotage operation
Tuesday, 8th January	The furniture is unloaded in Nyborg. At the same location sportswear is loaded.	Second cabotage operation
Same day	The sportswear is unloaded in Malmö (SE).	International transport, the waiting period in Denmark starts at 00:00
Wednesday, 9th January – Saturday, 12th January	The waiting period expires (originally) Saturday at 23:59. However, it is further extended to Monday at 23:59, since it originally expired on a Saturday	Waiting period ends
Tuesday, 15th January	Meat is loaded in Copenhagen and transported to Esbjerg	The waiting period ends and cabotage operation begins after the completion of the waiting period

7. Remuneration requirements for the performance of cabotage

A foreign operator subject to the cabotage rules is required to pay its drivers an hourly wage that is at least equal to the Danish minimum hourly rate, when the driver performs cabotage operations where the total permissible weight of the motor vehicle or the combinations of vehicles exceeds 3.5 tonnes.¹⁹ The minimum hourly rates are regulated each year, the updated rates are available at www.fstyr.dk.

Other work

The Danish minimum hourly rate shall only be paid for journeys with goods undertaken during the cabotage operations, thus not for other work.

Other work should be understood any activity defined as working time in Article 3 (a) of Directive 2002/15/EC with the exception of “driving”, including work performed for the same or another employer within or outside the transport sector.

Thus, these activities are not subject to the remuneration requirement.²⁰

- Loading and unloading,
- Unladen journeys, driving without goods or return pallets and the like as described in section 4 of this guidance,²¹
- Cleaning and technical maintenance,
- Any other work which is intended to ensure the safety of the vehicle and/or cargo or to fulfil legal or regulatory obligations specifically related to the transport in question including:
 - Supervision of loading and unloading,
 - Administrative formalities with police, customs or other authorities.

Example:

A driver employed by a transport operator established in Hamburg (DE) drives a loaded truck with fruit from Hamburg (DE) to Esbjerg where the goods are unloaded.

- In Esbjerg, the truck is loaded with meat products which are transported to and unloaded in Aarhus.

¹⁹ Executive Order no. 908 of 25th June 2025 on conditions for the performance of cabotage, the initial or final legs of combined transport and non-bilateral international transport, Section 12(2).

²⁰ Regulation No 561/2006, Article 4 (e) and Article 3 (a) of directive 2002/15/EU.

²¹ Note that in some cases the driver may be subject to the posting rules, even if the driver is not subject to the remuneration requirement. For further information in this respect, please refer to the Danish Road Traffic Authority's posting guide.

- The truck is driven unladen (empty journey) from Aarhus to Horsens.
- In Horsens, the wagon is loaded with milk which is transported to Padborg where it is unloaded.
- In Padborg, the driver waits for 3 hours for the terminal to load the truck with cheese which is to be transported back to Hamburg (DE).

The driver shall be paid the Danish minimum hourly rate for the performing of the following activities only:

- When driving goods from Esbjerg to Aarhus and
- When driving goods from Horsens to Padborg.

The above transport operations are cabotage operations.

Example 2:

A driver employed by a transport operator established in Hamburg (DE) performs an international transport operation from Hamburg (DE) – Aalborg.

Time sequence	Course of events	Characterization of the transport	Danish remuneration
Monday 12 ⁰⁰ -16 ⁰⁰	A drive is carried out from the German/Danish border to Aalborg	International transport	No
16 ⁰⁰ -21 ⁰⁰	Fruit is loaded in Aalborg and transported to Copenhagen	Cabotage operation	Yes
21 ⁰⁰ -00 ⁰⁰	The driver pauses in Copenhagen	Pause	No
Tuesday 00 ⁰⁰ -04 ⁰⁰	An empty journey is undertaken from Copenhagen to Esbjerg	Empty journey between cabotage operations ²²	No
04 ⁰⁰ -06 ⁰⁰	The vehicle is loaded with furniture	Loading of goods	No
06 ⁰⁰ -08 ⁰⁰	Furniture is transported from Esbjerg to Odense	Cabotage operation	Yes
08 ⁰⁰ -10 ³⁰	The furniture is unloaded from vehicle in Odense	Unloading of goods	No

Example 3:

En tysk lastbil udfører en international transport fra Hamburg (DE) – Ribe.

Time sequence	Course of events	Characterization of the transport	Danish remuneration
Monday 05 ⁰⁰ - 07 ⁰⁰	A drive is carried out from the German/Danish border to Ribe	International transport	No
07 ⁰⁰ - 09 ⁰⁰	Fruit is unloaded in Ribe	Unloading of goods	No
09 ⁰⁰ - 12 ⁰⁰	The driver pauses in Ribe	Pause	No
Tuesday 12 ⁰⁰ - 17 ⁰⁰	An empty journey is carried out from Ribe to Skagen	Empty journey ²³ between cabotage operations	No
17 ⁰⁰ - 18 ⁰⁰	The vehicle is loaded with furniture in Skagen	Loading of goods	No
18 ⁰⁰ - 23 ³⁰	Furniture is carried from Skagen to Copenhagen	Cabotage operation	Yes
23 ³⁰ - 01 ⁰⁰	The furniture is unloaded from vehicle	Unloading of goods	No
Wednesday 01 ⁰⁰ -09 ⁰⁰	The driver rests	Rest	No

²² In this example, an empty journey is without a trailer or a semi-trailer, and therefore only the motor vehicle.

²³ In this example, an empty journey is without a trailer or a semi-trailer, and therefore only the motor vehicle.

8. Documentation requirements

Documentation that the carriage takes place in the host Member State:

There must be documentation for the inbound international transport, regardless of which Member State it is concluded in, as well as documentation for each subsequent cabotage operation performed in Denmark.

If the vehicle performs cabotage and has been in Denmark for 4 days prior to the international transport operation, the below mentioned documentation of all journeys performed during the period shall be presented upon request.²⁴

The documentation does not necessarily have to appear in one document, but shall include the following information about each transport:²⁵

- a) Consignor's name, address and signature.²⁶
- b) Transport company's name, address and signature.²⁶
- c) Consignee's name and address and, upon delivery of the goods, the consignee's signature and the date of delivery.
- d) Place and date of the receipt of the goods as well as the place where the goods are to be delivered.
- e) The commonly used name for the goods and the method of packaging as well as, in the event of dangerous goods, a commonly recognised description of the goods as well as the number of packages and their special marks and numbers.
- f) The gross weight of the goods or the quantity of goods expressed in another way.
- g) The vehicle registration plate of the motor vehicle and trailer.

The documentation may constitute a CMR consignment note or another freight document provided that the said document contains the required information. In addition, the documentation may exist in electronic form.

The driver is required to present the above documents to the control authorities in connection with roadside checks and on demand.²⁷

An electronic forwarding of documentation to the vehicle within a short period of time is accepted. Consequently, the driver may contact the head office of the operator, the transport manager, the operator or another person or unity with the purpose of having forwarded the above documentation.²⁸

Data from the tachograph

In accordance with Regulations (EC) No 561/2006 and (EU) No 165/2014, the driver is required to present data from the tachograph and, particularly, the nationality marks of the Member States in which the driver was present when carrying out international road transport or cabotage operations.

Posting declaration²⁹

In the event of cabotage, the driver is regarded as posted to the host Member State. It is a requirement that the operator has completed a posting declaration via IMI no later than before the start time of the posting.³⁰ The driver is also required to have a copy of the posting declaration and the above documentation at his disposal and make such available.³¹

No further documentation may be required in the context of the international transport and cabotage operations performed.

²⁴ Executive Order no. 522 of 21st May 2025 on road haulage, Section 30 and Article 8(3) of Regulation No. 1072/2009.

²⁵ Art. 8(3) (a) - (g) of Regulation No. 1072/2009.

²⁶ Consignor and transport operator signatures may be printed or replaced by stamps.

²⁷ Executive Order no. 522 of 21st May 2025 on road haulage, Section 30.

²⁸ Article 8(4a) of Regulation No. 1072/2009.

²⁹ Directive 2020/1057 Article 1(11) and the Executive Order no. 908 of 25th June 2025 on conditions for carrying out cabotage, the initial or final legs of combined transport and non-bilateral international transport Section 8. See also the Danish Road Traffic Authority's guide on posting rules.

³⁰ This does not apply to operators established in an EEA member state. Does not apply to self-employed drivers.

³¹ Executive Order no. 908 of 25th June 2025 on conditions for the performance of cabotage, the initial or final legs of combined transport and non-bilateral international transport Section 9(1).

However, this does not imply that no other documentation required under transport legislation may be used to determine whether the cabotage operation has been carried out in accordance with the rules. This may include, for example, data from control devices used in connection with the driving and rest time regulations, or toll usage data for tolls paid.

9. Penalties in the event of a violation of cabotage rules

Violation of the rules on cabotage is punishable by a fine.³²

Fines for violation of the cabotage rules are in principle DKK 5,000 for minor violations (e.g., lack of information on the designation of the goods), DKK 15,000 for serious violations (e.g., lack of documentation for the international transport operation) and DKK 35,000 for very serious violations (e.g. illegal cabotage operations by for example violating the waiting period or driving more than 3 journeys or 7 days).³³

Violation of the remuneration requirement in connection with cabotage operations, as well as failure to meet the documentation requirement after the end of the posting period, is also punishable by a fine.³⁴

There may be a doubling or tripling of the amount of the fine if there are aggravating circumstances. The doubling or tripling will be made on the basis of a concrete assessment in each individual case.

The police may seize the motor vehicle if deemed necessary to secure a claim for payment of a fine and legal costs or to secure confiscation, including value confiscation, but only until the said amounts have been paid or a security has been provided.³⁵

Depending on the circumstances, a freight forwarder may be penalised for complicity in the violation of cabotage rules of a foreign transport company in accordance with the general rules on complicity in section 23 of the Danish Criminal Code.

10. Further information

In case of the need for further clarification please contact:

The Danish Road Traffic Authority
Sorsigvej 35
6760 Ribe
Telephone: 7221 8899
E-mail: info@fstyr.dk

³² Executive Order no. 522 of 21st May 2025 on road haulage Section 47, cf. the Freight Transport Act no. 327 of 23rd March 2024, Section 17(1)(3) and Bill 2013 58, Appendix 4 and Bill 2021.62 A, comments on no. 43.

³³ Bill 2013, 58, comments pkt. 2.1.2 and appendix 2.

³⁴ Executive Order no. 908 of 25th June 2025 on conditions for the performance of cabotage, the initial or final legs of combined transport and non-bilateral international transport, Section 18(1).

³⁵ The Freight Transport Act no. 327 of 23rd March 2024, Section 16.