VDA Verband der Automobilindustrie

Transport order with EDI

VDA 4933 Recommendation

Version 3.3, October 2026



Process description

This Recommendation provides an overview of the targeted communication model for transport order placement and confirmation in the automotive industry.

It includes descriptions of use cases that aim to help the involved process partners (ship-from party, ship-to party, logistics service provider) as well as the implementation partners of software solutions in to understand the process and implement the system.

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Status	October 2026
Version	Version 3.3

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1 Introduction

1.1 Objective

This Recommendation was prepared within the framework of activities to support the further digitization of processes in the automotive industry, in particular to support logistics processes.

The electronic transport order creates the basis for IT-supported seamless and transparent transport control, shipment tracking and billing.

The objectives of standardised transport order placement:

- Reduction of communication overheads
- Standardised, structured data to improve data quality
- Higher process reliability through transparency and data quality
- Correct and transparent evaluation of the process performance

This Recommendation is part of a whole series of documents based on the concept of event-driven, transparent transport chains that support increasingly complex logistics processes.

Table 1: List of transport-relevant VDA recommendations

VDA number	EDI message type	Description
4933 T1 and T3	DESADV	Transport order for full or empty containers
4933 T2 and T4	DESADV	Transport order confirmation for full or empty containers
4937	APERAK	Acknowledgement and error message
4943 T1 and T2	DESADV	Dispatch preview/advice for empties
4945 T1	IFTSTA	Transport status message
4947 T1	RECADV	Confirmation of empties receipt
4987 T1	DESADV	Dispatch advice full container

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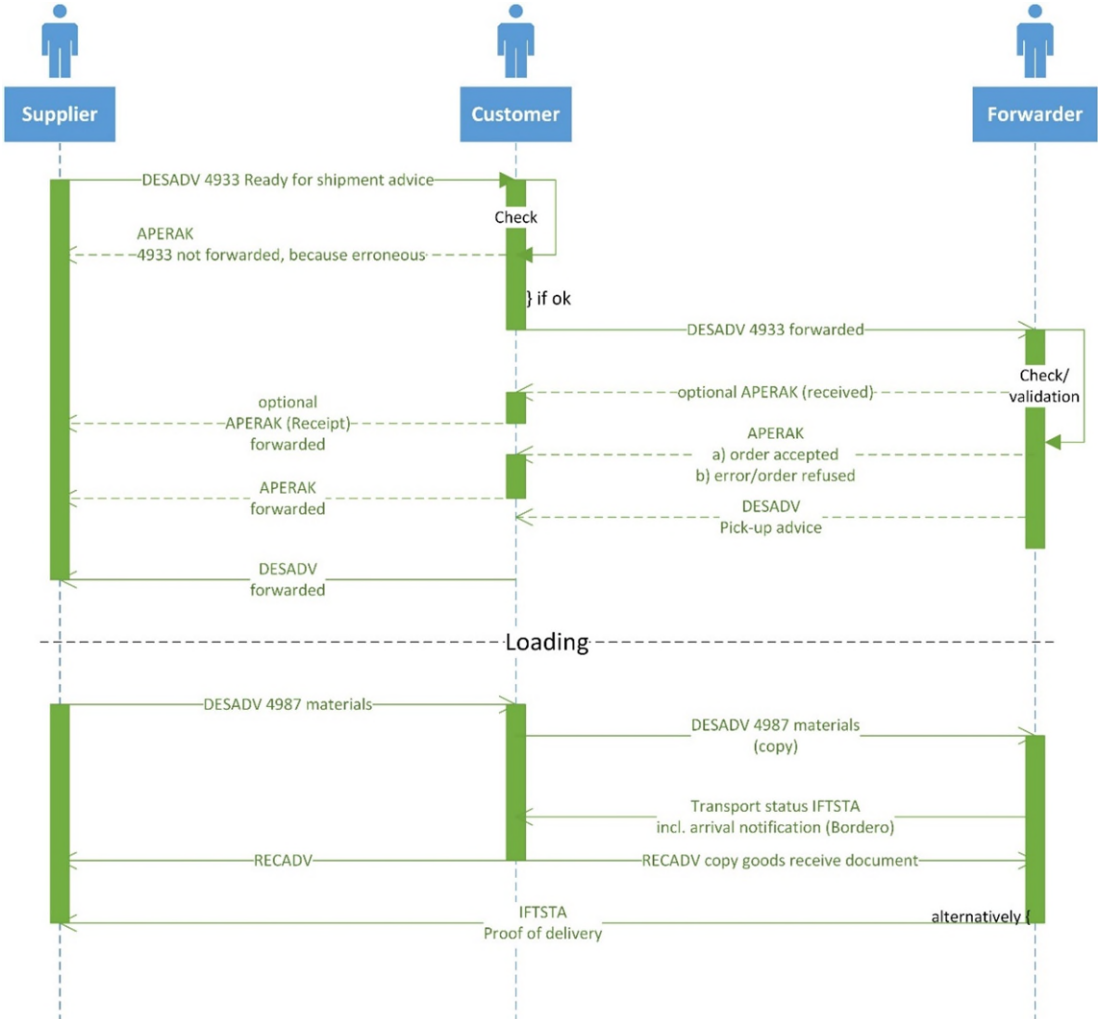

Figure 1: Ideal-typical information flow for delivery scenarios for full containers with operative commissioning of the forwarding agent by the supplier

1.2 Event-driven transport chain

The communication model is based on an event-driven transport chain. The following figure shows an exemplary representation of the standard events for all modes of transport:

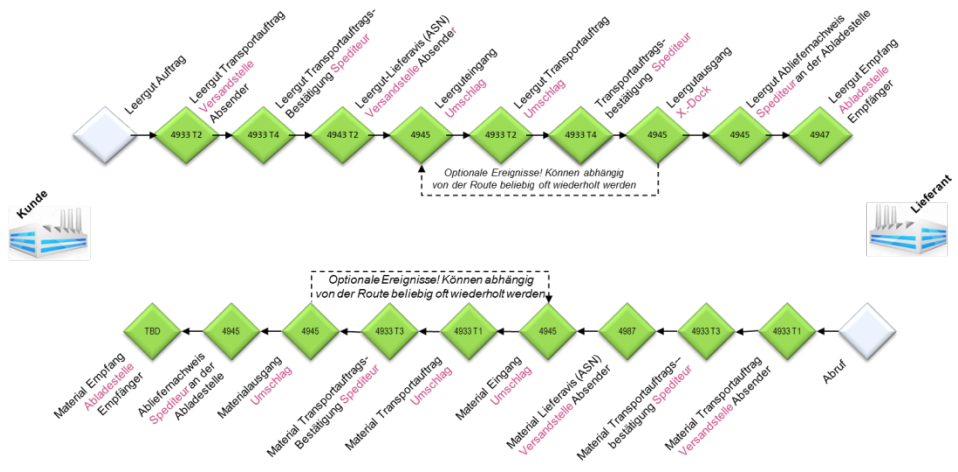

Figure 2 Event-driven transport chain

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1.3 Shipment-related transport order

A transport order in the scenarios described here is a shipment-related (qualified) transport order, as opposed to a pure purchase order for freight space, i.e. a non-qualified transport order in which you do not specify how the individual shipments are configured.

The following assumptions apply to a qualified transport order:

A transport order is created for each shipment by bundling the shipment (material, empty containers) that is to be transferred together for shipment from the loading point of a ship-from party to the unloading point of a ship-to party on a defined date. The capacity of the planned transport container (megatrailer, wagon, container, etc.) must be taken into account (volume and weight). If the volume/allowable weight of the shipment exceeds the volume/allowable weight of the transport container, it must be divided into several shipments (split shipment). In current processes, this is usually handled by manual agreements/processes between the forwarder and the shipper as 'exception handling'. The 'Full container' case example in section 2 contains a detailed description of a transport order process for an advice with transport of large transport container.

In principle, it is assumed in all variants of transport that shipments loaded at the ship-from party must not be split during the transport chain up to the ship-to party. If this nevertheless occurs in practice, it is a process disturbance that must trigger an exception handling.

If a transport contains several shipments, a separate transport order must be created for each shipment.

The detailed requirements of the automotive industry for transport orders and confirmations are best supported by the EDIFACT message type DESADV. The VDA Recommendations therefore use this message type.

2 References provided in the transport process

The aim of this communication model is to ensure transparency regarding the current status of a material or container within the transport chain. In order to fulfil this requirement, a unique reference must be available during the communication of each event, which enables the partners to assign the event internally and externally.

The following references are currently provided for each message type.

Transport chain reference - per shipment (RFF+AKI)

The transport chain reference is the bracket for the assignment of individual transport stages with separate transport order of a shipment, thus ensuring consistent invoicing.

The transport chain reference is handed over in the transport order confirmation by the forwarder who takes over the shipment from the ship-from party (forwarder of transport stage 1).

To ensure global uniqueness of these references it is necessary for them to contain

- a globally unique number that identifies the forwarding agent, for example, DUNS or Odette number
- plus a unique number assigned by the latter, which must not be repeated over a longer period of time (> 1 year).

This ensures that a unique number is available as a reference throughout the entire transport process, from the transport order confirmation to the delivery.

The following figure is provided for a better understanding of the process application:

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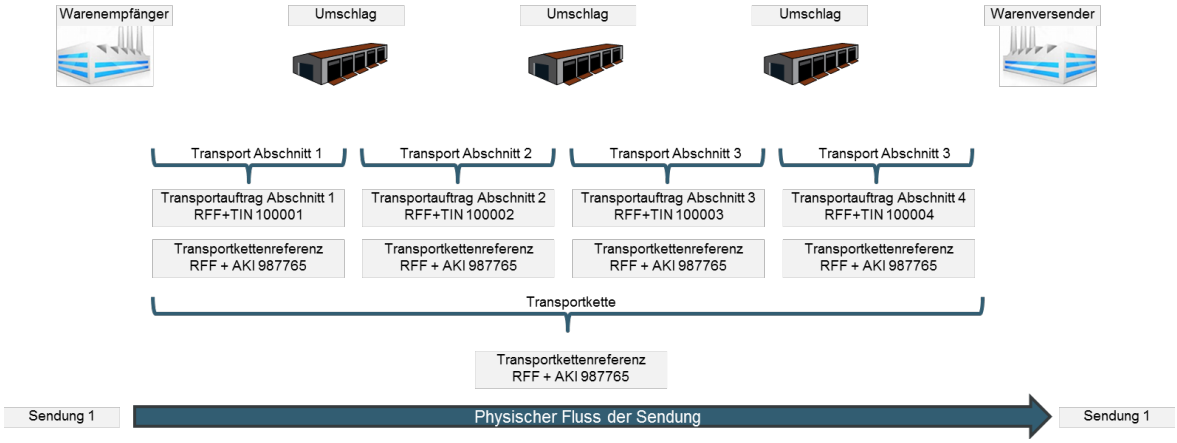

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Table 2: Reference data

	Transport order (full container) 4933 A1	Transport order (empties) 4933 A2	APERAK 4933 A5	Transport order confirmation (full container) 4833 A3	Transport order confirmation (empties) 4933 A4	Dispatch advice (full container) 4987 A1	Dispatch advice (empties) 4943 A2	Transport status notification 4945 A1	Receiving notification (empties) 4947 A1
Transport order number of current shipment stage	BGM(M)	BGM(M)	RFF+TIN(M)	RFF+TIN(M)	RFF+TIN (M)	RFF+TIN (D)	RFF+TIN (D)	RFF+TIN(O)	-
Transport order confirmation number of pick-up forwarder	-	-	-	BGM(M)	BGM(M)	-	-	-	-
Transport chain reference	RFF+AKI (O)	RFF+AKI (O)	-	RFF+AKI (O)	RFF+AKI (O)	RFF+AKI (O)	RFF+AKI (O)	RFF+AKI (O)	-
Shipment number (ship-from party)	RFF+CRN(O)	RFF+CRN(O)	-	RFF+CRN(O)	RFF+CRN(O)	RFF+CRN(M)	RFF+CRN(M)	CNI (M)	RFF+CRN(M)
Delivery call-off or dispatch call-off number of customer	RFF+AAN(O)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transport order to be replaced	RFF+AAK(O)	RFF+AAK(O)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transport number (LSP) - Bordero	-	-	-	RFF+AFC (O)	RFF+AFC (O)	-	-	RFF+AFC (O)	-
Door opener pick-up issued by ship-from party	RFF+ABE (O)	RFF+ABE (O)	-	RFF+ABE (O)	RFF+ABE (O)	-	-	-	-
Transport ID (time window booking) / door opener for delivery assigned by ship-to party	-	-	-	–	–	RFF+AAO (O)	RFF+AAO (O)	RFF+AAO (O)	-
Customs declaration number	RFF+ABT (O)	RFF+ABT(O)	-	RFF+ABT(O)	RFF+ABT (O)	RFF+ABT (O)	RFF+ABT (O)	RFF+ABT (O)	-
Reference number of shipment assigned by forwarder (e.g. UPS/DHL/DPD number etc.)	-	-	-	RFF+AVU (O)	RFF+AVU (O)	RFF+AVU (O)	RFF+AVU (O)	RFF+AVU (O)	-
Officially assigned transport number, e.g. EKAER number in Hungary	-	-	-	-	-	RFF+AEL (O)	RFF+AEL (O)	RFF+AEL (O)	-
Waybill number(s)	-	-	-	-	-	RFF+AAM RFF+HWB RFF+MWB (O)	RFF+AAM RFF+HWB RFF+MWB (O)	RFF+AAM RFF+HWB RFF+MWB (O)	-
Dispatch call-off number (reference to DELJIT)	RFF+AAN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Current account of ship-from	-	-	-	NAD+SF\RFF+ADE (O)	-	-	-	-	-

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Transport order reference (RFF+TIN)

The transport order reference refers to a transport stage and corresponds in 4933 T1 and T2 to the BGM segment 1004 Document Identifier, i.e. the message number. In the following messages it will be transmitted in RFF+TIN.

If the transport chain consists of several transport stages, each transport stage can be ordered individually and will be accordingly assigned its own transport order number (see also Fig. 4)

In order to establish the uniqueness of the number when used by different process partners, this number must be stored together with a globally unique ship-from number (e.g. DUNS or Odette number).

Transport order confirmation number (BGM of 4933 T2 and T4)

The transport order confirmation number is assigned by the pick-up forwarder and is also the number of the BGM 1000 message - there is no alternative RFF qualifier.

In order to establish the uniqueness of the number when used by different process partners, this number must be stored together with a globally unique ship-from number (e.g. DUNS or Odette number).

Shipment number (RFF+CRN in DESADV or CNI in IFTSTA)

Reference that designates the actual shipment sent. This number is assigned by the ship-from party of the goods/empties.

The global uniqueness of the number results from concatenation with a globally unique number of the shipper (for example, DUNS or Odette number).

Forwarder transport number "Bordero" (RFF+AFC)

This reference applies to all individual shipments that are transported in a groupage shipment on a transport section from a forwarder to a transhipment point/ship-to party in the same transport container (truck, container, wagon).

Pick-up door opener (RFF+ABE)

This reference describes the ID with which the forwarder gains access to the premises of the goods/empties ship-from party. This is usually the ID with which a time window was booked for the loading point.

Door opener pick-up (RFF+AAO)

This reference describes the ID with which the transport has access to the ship-to party's premises. This is usually the ID with which a time window was booked for the unloading point

Customs declaration number (RFF+ABT)

Returns the ID of the customs declaration

Reference number of the shipment assigned by the forwarder (RFF + AVU)

This reference describes a unique tracking number assigned by the forwarder (e.g. UPS/DHL/DPD tracking number, etc.)

Officially assigned transport number (RFF+AEL)

In some countries there are officially prescribed approval or registration processes for shipments in this case the authority assigns a transaction or release number. This reference serves for the transmission of this number, e.g. EKAER number in Hungary.

Delivery call-off/dispatch call-off numbers (RFF+AAN) (full containers only)

If the shipment is based on a delivery call-off, the number of the delivery call-off can be transmitted with this reference.

Waybill number (RFF+AAM, RFF+HWB, RFF+MWB)

This reference can be used to transfer the reference to the other valid waybill.

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3 Communication process with EDI messages

3.1 Transport order process for full container

The message may indicate the date and time requested or desired by the ship-from party or the transhipment point for receipt of the shipment.

The figure shows one of the two possible communication variants.

Variant 1: Ship-from order (full container: supplier) via ship-to party (full container: customer) to the LSP.

Variant 2: Order from ship-from party to the LSP, who sends a copy to the ship-to party.

The advantage of variant 1 is that the customer, who usually contracts the LSP, only has to change or re-establish one connection if the service provider changes; in variant 2, each affected supplier would have to adapt his system.

3.2 Transport order process for empties

In the case of empties, the transport order is sent directly to the forwarder by BHM or its transportation management system.

3.3 Transport order processes in segmented transport

In the segmented transport process, the individual transport stages may be ordered separately (e.g. preliminary leg, main leg, subsequent leg). The current shipment stage can also be specified in the qualified transport order; the ship-from party and ship-to party remain the same throughout the entire transport chain. In addition, the location of the collection and the location of the transfer to the forwarding agent for the current shipment stage can be transmitted.

3.4 Transport order confirmation for full/empty containers

The qualified transport order confirmation is based, just like the qualified transport order, on the EDIFACT message type DESADV.

The message is used by the commissioned transport service provider. The order and the pick-up, with precise time specifications if necessary, are confirmed. It includes in particular

- the confirmed pick-up day and time window. If this message confirms a different time period than that required in the transport order, it is assumed that this has been agreed bilaterally beforehand and that the jointly agreed result is communicated in the transport order.
- the means of transport with which the shipment is to be collected.

3.5 Acknowledgement and error message

The APERAK message secures the technical communication process; it does not provide any additional data for the business processes. This message firstly confirms the receipt of the messages and secondly informs in case of errors whether the message can be processed or was rejected.

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4 Case examples

The purpose of this section is to use sample data to illustrate how the process of order placement and confirmation can be interpreted.

4.1 Case example: Simple transport order

The transport order process consists of the transport order by the ship-from party and the transport order confirmation by the pick-up forwarder.

A supplier orders a shipment to be picked up at a desired shipping date with the VDA 4933 T1 transport order.

Table 3: Simple transport order

4933 A1 Transport order from supplier to logistics service provider								
Required shipping date: 10.10.2017, 15:30 h				TKR	TAR	Shipment		
Ship-from	Ship-to	Qty LE	m3	RFF+AKI	BGM/1004	RFF+CRN		
Supplier AG, Dortmund	OEM GmbH, Berlin	90	90	-	100101	-		
				Items				
				Qty LE	LE-type	Part number	Volume	Kg, gross
				30	114888	4711	30	6000
				30	GT00070	1712	30	9000
				30	114888	4713	30	3000

TKR - Transport chain reference TAR - Transport order number/reference

The forwarding agent carries out his transportation planning in his own TMS and sends a 4933 T3 transport order confirmation in which he communicates the transport chain reference, the confirmed pick-up date and time window and the intended indicator.

Table 4: Transport order confirmation

4933 A1 Transport order confirmation from logistics service provider to supplier								
Confirmed shipping date: 10.10.2017, 15:30 h				TKR	TAR	Shipment		
Ship-from	Ship-to	Qty LE	m3	RFF+AKI	RFF+TIN	RFF+CRN		
Supplier AG, Dortmund	OEM GmbH, Berlin	90	90	A002900	100101	-		
				Items				
				Qty LE	LE type	Part number	Volume	Kg, gross
				30	114888	4711	30	6000
				30	GT00070	1712	30	9000
				30	114888	4713	30	3000

4.2 Case example: Transport order for large transport container (truck, wagon, container)

A supplier orders a shipment to be picked up on a requested pick-up date with the VDA 4933 T1 transport order.

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Table 5: Transport order with gross weight > Load capacity of the means of transport

4933 A1 Transport order supplier to logistics service provider								
Required shipping date: 10.10.2017, 12:00-14:00 h				TKR	TAR	Shipment		
Ship-from	Ship-to	Qty LE	m3	RFF+AKI	BGM/1004	RFF+CRN		
Supplier AG, Dortmund	OEM, Berlin	90	90	-	100102	-		
				Items				
				Qty LE	LE type	Part number	Volume	Kg, gross
				30	114888	4711	30	6000
				30	GT00070	1712	30	9000
				50	114888	4713	50	5000

During transport planning in his own transportation management system (TMS), the forwarder finds that the volume of the shipment exceeds the capacity of the planned truck and splits the original transport order at loading unit level.

In response, it sends two 4933 A3 transport order confirmations with the reference to the original transport order (RFF+TIN) and the note "Split shipment". In addition, it generates a transport chain reference (RFF+AKI) for each transport order confirmation. Based on the transport chain reference, the supplier creates two 4987 dispatch advices and the corresponding documents accompanying the goods.

Table 6: Transport order confirmation 1 with split shipment

4933 A3 Transport order confirmation from logistics service provider to supplier								
Confirmed shipping date: 10.10.2017, 14:30 h				TKR	TAR	Shipment		
Ship-from	Ship-to	Qty LE	m3	RFF+AKI	RFF+TIN	RFF+CRN		
Supplier AG, Dortmund	OEM, Berlin	90	90	A002901	100102	-		
				Items				
				Qty LE	LE type	Part number	Volume	Kg, gross
				30	114888	4711	30	6000
				30	GT00070	1712	30	9000
				30	114888	4713	30	3000

Table 7: Transport order confirmation 2 with split shipment

4933 A3 Transport order confirmation from logistics service provider to supplier								
Confirmed shipping date: 10.10.2017, 15:30 h				TKR	TAR	Shipment		
Ship-from	Ship-to	Qty LE	m3	RFF+AKI	BGM/1004	RFF+CRN		
Supplier AG, Dortmund	OEM, Berlin	90	90	A002902	100102	-		
				Items				
				Qty LE	LE type	Part number	Volume	Kg, gross
				20	114888	4713	20	2000

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5 Appendices

Appendix 1: VDA 4933 Part 1 - EDI Guideline DESADV Transport Order Full Containers

Appendix 2: VDA 4933 Part 2 - EDI Guideline DESADV Transport Order Empties

Appendix 3: VDA 4933 Part 3 - EDI Guideline DESADV Transport Order Full Containers Confirmation

Appendix 4: VDA 4933 Part 4 - EDI Guideline DESADV Transport Order Empties Confirmation

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