

An unremarkable pick-up truck - but so very important  
to ramp operations in Old Gander

Anybody familiar with aviation knows full well that without a well-run operation on the ramp, airplanes will never get into the sky. And when they do actually get airborne, the life of passengers can be uncomfortable, if not downright miserable, if ground crews do not do their jobs properly.

Ground crews use a variety of vehicles. This could mean the emergency equipment such as fire trucks or ambulances on 24-hour standby. The ploughs and snow blowers are in constant use as needed by the conditions. Other maintenance vehicles roam the airport to make sure that lights, transmission lines, perimeter roads and the like are in good condition. Commissary vans bring the meals for in-flight use.

The photos below show another vehicle of critical importance. It is the dark-colour pick-up near the airplanes being refuelled.

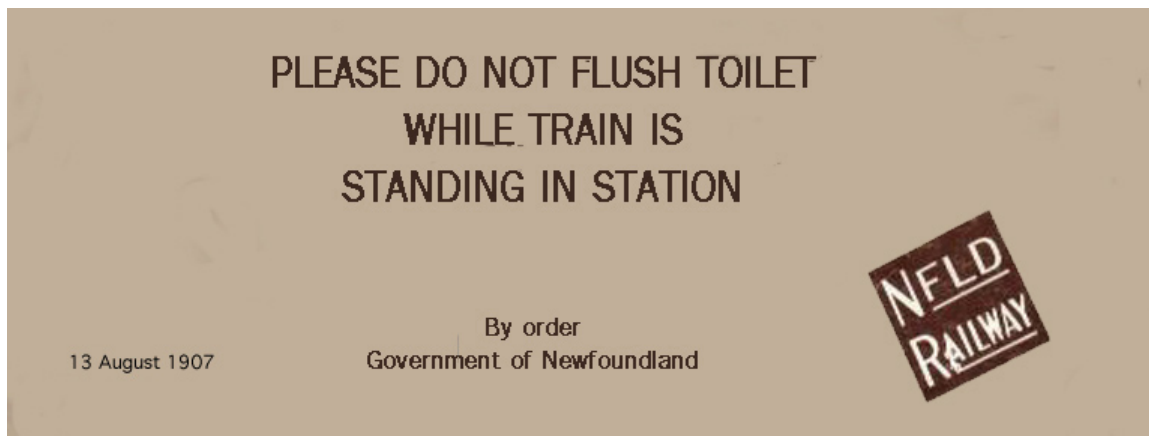




To be able to really understand the importance and complex operation of this vehicle, a certain experience in aviation would be very useful. It would be equally useful to well understand aviation jargon.

To specialists in aeronautics, this is known as the “Honey wagon”.

Back in the days of the Newfoundland Railway and later Canadian National Railways passenger trains - the “Newfy Bullet” – there was a sign in the toilets that looked like the one below:



One could suppose that they didn't want to have to come up with one that would have said “Do not flush toilet when airplane is standing on the tarmac”.

Some dedicated soul with a pick-up truck took care of that problem in Gander. And hats off to him.