Pallet Control
TOWER

USER MANUAL

Pallet Control Tower Business Edition

Track consigned pallets, returns, stock and disputes. A Windows application that works entirely offline.

Version	System	Licence	Manual edition
1.1.6	Windows 10 / 11 (64-bit)	Business, perpetual, bound to one PC	October 2026

Contents

1	Overview and offline operation	3
2	System requirements and installation	4
3	First launch and sign-in	5
4	Licence activation	6
5	Getting to know the interface	9
6	Initial setup: company, partners, pallets	11
7	Consignment notes	13
8	Returns, recovery plan and QR scan	15
9	Stock and movements	18
10	Discrepancies, disputes and claims	20
11	Dashboard, search, analytics and exports	21
12	Excel import and audit log	25
13	Backup and restore	28
14	PC change, failure or replacement	30
15	Troubleshooting	31
16	Support	32

Conventions used in this manual

Menu paths are written like this: Administration › Backup. The exact buttons and labels of the software look like this: **Back up now** . Screens are described with the interface set to English.

1 Overview and offline operation

Pallet Control Tower follows your pallets from dispatch to return: what you send to your customers, depots and carriers, what comes back, what is still outside and what it is worth.

What the software does

- **Consignment notes**: every pallet dispatch, with automatic numbering, a printable PDF with a QR code, signatures and photos.
- **Returns**: record the pallets that come back, including damaged ones. The balance of each note is calculated automatically.
- **Stock**: initial stock, new entries, current stock per location, a ledger of every movement, and empty pallets by condition.
- **Disputes**: missing or damaged pallets, transport or financial issues, tracked until they are resolved.
- **Management**: dashboard, alerts, analytics, PDF reports and Excel exports.
- **Data protection**: manual and automatic backups, restore in a few clicks, and an audit log.

100% offline

Pallet Control Tower is installed on and runs on a single Windows PC. **No Internet connection is needed**: not for installation, not for licence activation, not for daily use.

- Your data is stored **only on your computer**, in the folder `%APPDATA%\Pallet Control Tower`. Nothing is sent to an external server.
- The software has no online account, no subscription and no automatic update.
- The only feature that can use the network is **optional**: setting up a mail server to send a test email from Analytics & Reports (see chapter 11). If you do not set it up, the software never uses the network.

> **Important consequence**
>
> Because your data never leaves your PC, **keeping a copy of it outside that computer is up to you** (USB drive, external disk, network share). Chapter 13 shows how to do it in two clicks.

The licence

The Pallet Control Tower **Business edition** licence is **perpetual** and valid for **one computer**. It comes as a `.lic` file that you import once into the software (chapter 4).

2 System requirements and installation

System requirements

Item	Requirement
Operating system	Windows 10 or Windows 11, 64-bit (x64).
Additional software	None. The installer contains everything that is needed.
Windows rights	A standard Windows user account is enough: the software installs into the user's profile.
Disk space	The installer is under 200 MB. Allow extra space for your data, photos and backups.
Screen	The software window needs at least 1024 × 640 pixels.
Camera (optional)	Only for the QR Scan feature.
Internet	Not required.

Installing the software

1. Copy the file `PALLET-CONTROL-TOWER-Setup.exe` to the PC, then double-click it.
2. If Windows shows **"Windows protected your PC"** (SmartScreen filter), click **More info**, then **Run anyway**. This message appears because the installer is not digitally signed. It does not mean there is a problem with the file.
3. Installation runs automatically, with no questions to answer.
4. A **Pallet Control Tower** shortcut is created on the Desktop and in the Start menu. Start the software from this shortcut if it does not open on its own at the end of installation.

> **Checking the file's integrity (optional)**
>
> The `SHA256SUMS.txt` file supplied with the installer contains its fingerprint. In PowerShell: `Get-FileHash .\PALLET-CONTROL-TOWER-Setup.exe`. The result must match the value in the file.

Where is the software installed?

Content	Location
Program	`%LOCALAPPDATA%\PalletControlTower`
Database	`%APPDATA%\Pallet Control Tower\data\pallets.db`
Photos and attachments	`%APPDATA%\Pallet Control Tower\data\uploads`

Content	Location
Backups	`%APPDATA%\Pallet Control Tower\data\backups`
Technical logs	`%APPDATA%\Pallet Control Tower\logs`

To open one of these folders, paste the path into the address bar of Windows File Explorer.

Reinstalling or uninstalling

- **Reinstall**: simply run `PALLET-CONTROL-TOWER-Setup.exe` again. Your data and licence are kept.
- **Uninstall**: Windows Settings › Apps. The program is removed, but **your data is deliberately kept** in `%APPDATA%\Pallet Control Tower`, so a reinstall finds it again with nothing lost. If you need to return or recycle the PC, first make an external copy of your backups (chapter 13), then delete that folder by hand.

3 First launch and sign-in

Creating the administrator account

On the very first launch, the software shows the **"Welcome to Pallet Control Tower"** screen with the line *"First installation: create your administrator account"*.

1. Enter a **Username** (at least 3 characters).
2. Enter a **Password** of **at least 8 characters**, then type it again in **Confirm password**. The eye icon shows the password so you can check what you typed.
3. Click **Create the account and start**.

This screen appears only once. The account created is an **Administrator** account: it has access to every feature, including the Administration menu.

> **Keep your credentials somewhere safe**
>
> The sign-in screen has no "forgot password" feature. Keep your username and password in a password manager or another safe place. If you lose them, contact support (chapter 16).

This version has no user management screen: the administrator account created at first launch is the account used to work with the software.

Signing in and out

- On later launches, the **"Sign in to your account"** screen appears: enter your **Username** and **Password**, then click **Sign in**.
- To sign out, click the exit icon at the top right (tooltip **Log out**).
- The message "Invalid username or password" means a typing error: check the Caps Lock key in particular.

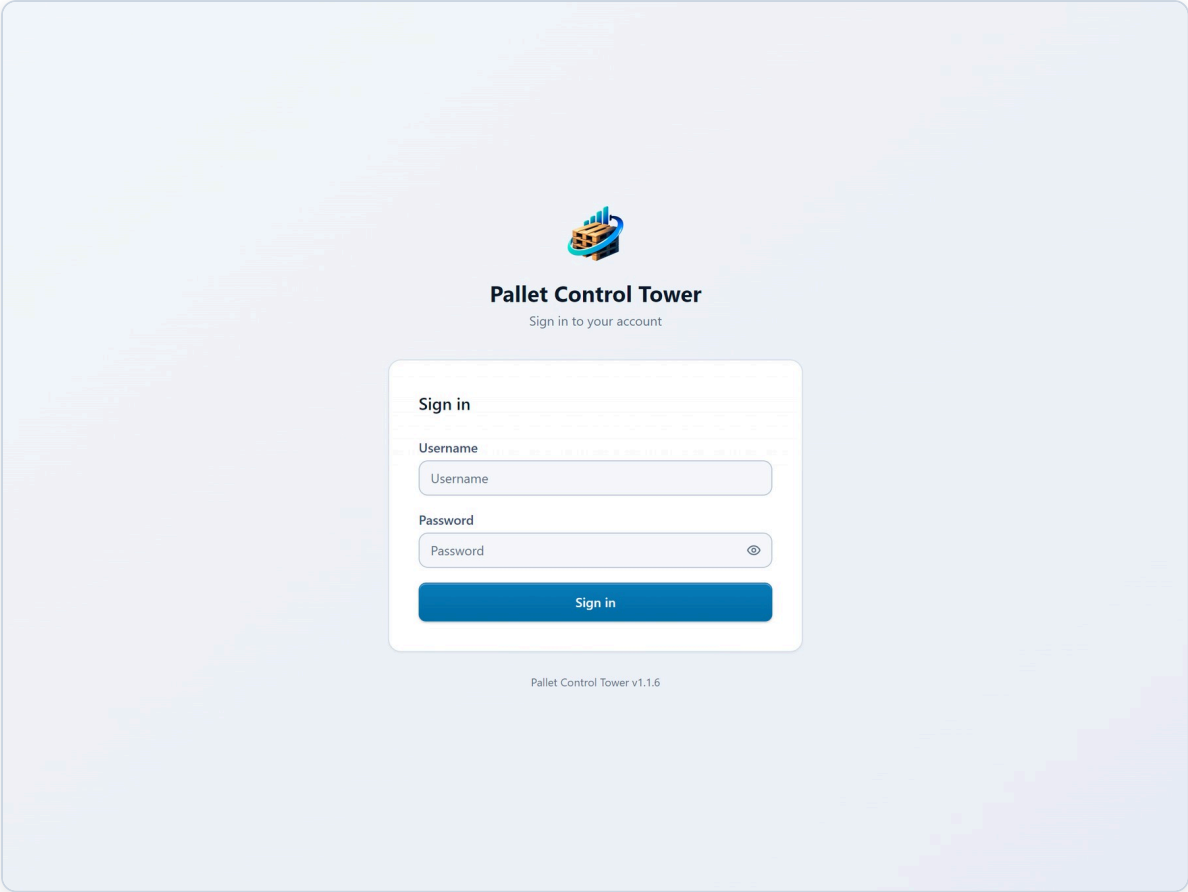


Figure 1 — Sign-in screen

Right after creating the account

As long as no licence is activated, the software takes you to the Administration › License screen, with the **"Licence required."** banner. Go straight to the next chapter.

4 Licence activation

Activation is done entirely offline, by exchanging an identifier and a file. It only needs to be done once per computer.

Why activation?

Your licence is issued for **one specific computer**. Each PC has a unique identifier, calculated by the software, in the format `PCT-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX`. The licence file you receive only works on the computer with that identifier.

Until a valid licence is activated, **the application stays locked**. Only sign-in, the License screen and the Backup screen remain available.

Activation steps

1. Open Administration › License. The software takes you there automatically after the account is created.

2. In the **“This computer's identifier”** box, click `Copy`. The button then shows `Copied`.
3. Send this identifier to **palletcontroltower@outlook.com**, together with your **exact company name** and your **order reference**. You can send this email from any connected device (phone, another PC): the PC where the software is installed does not need Internet access.
4. You receive a licence file with the `.lic` extension in return. Copy it to the PC, for example with a USB drive.
5. In Administration › License, in the **“Activate or replace a licence”** box, click `Import a licence file` and select the `.lic` file.
6. The message **“Licence activated successfully.”** appears and the status changes to `Valid licence`. All menus are now available.

Good to know

- Importing a licence **does not change or delete any existing data**.
- The licence stays valid after a restart, a Windows update, added memory or disk, or a network card change.
- Keep a copy of the `.lic` file with your backups: you will need it if you reinstall the software on the same Windows installation.

Reading the License screen

Area	Meaning
Licence status	`Valid licence`, `Invalid licence` (with the reason shown below it) or “Starter edition (no licence activated)”.
Edition	**Business**: the edition written in your licence file.
Licensed company	The name of the company the licence was issued to.
Licensed modules	The features included in the Business edition: *Advanced analytics*, *Executive report (PDF + email)* and *Company and document branding*.

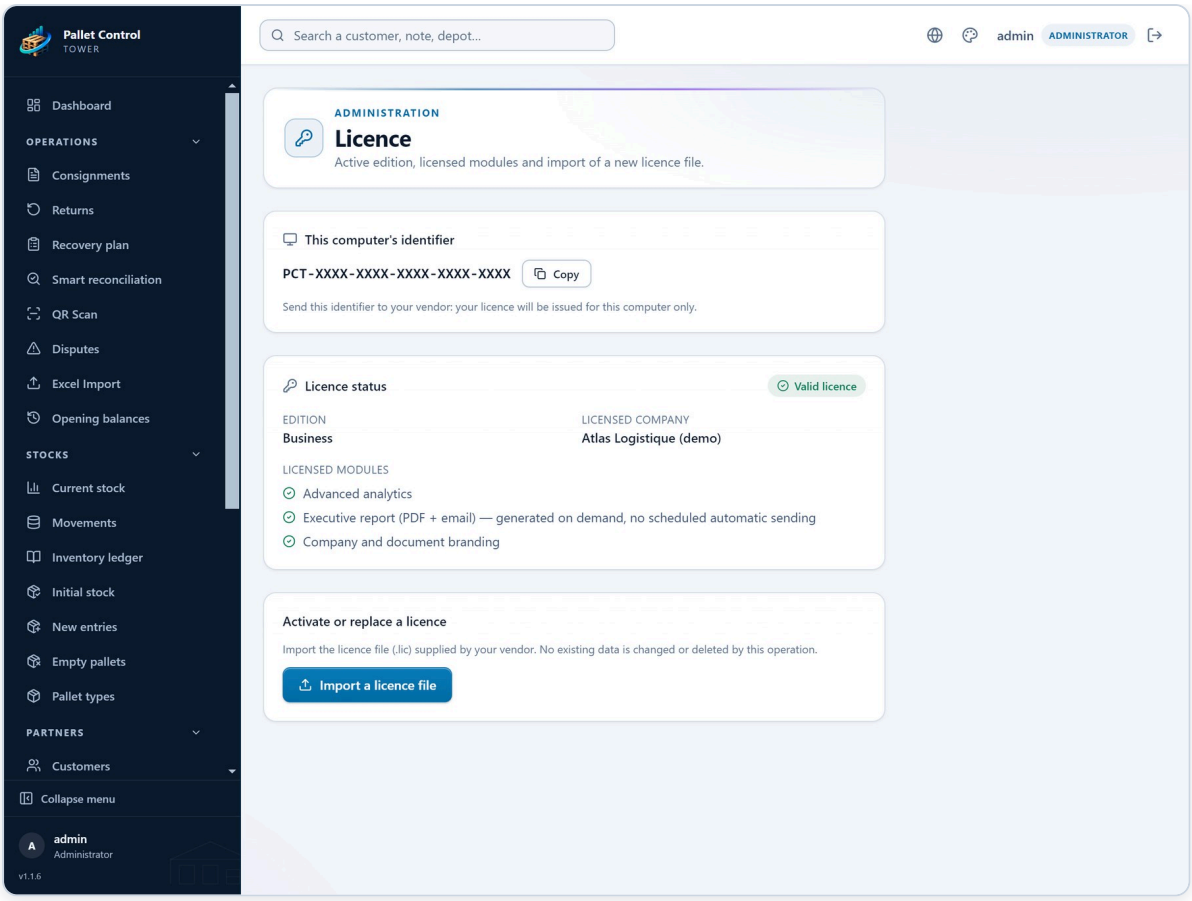


Figure 2 — Licence screen after activation (computer identifier masked in this manual)

Possible messages

Message	What to do
"This licence is bound to another computer..."	The file was issued for another PC, or this PC's identifier has changed (Windows reinstall, new PC). Send the identifier shown to support (see chapter 14).
"This computer's identifier could not be found."	The software cannot read the PC's Windows identifier. Contact support.
"Licence not bound to a computer..."	This file is not valid for this version. Contact support.
"Licence activation failed"	Check that you selected the `.lic` file you received, and that it has not been edited or renamed to anything other than `.lic`.

5 Getting to know the interface

The side menu

The left-hand menu gives access to every module, grouped by theme:

Dashboard

Overview: indicators, trends, alerts.

Operations

Consignments · Returns · Recovery plan · QR Scan · Disputes · Excel Import

Stocks

Current stock · Movements · Inventory ledger · Initial stock · New entries · Empty pallets · Pallet types

Partners

Customers · Carriers · Drivers · Depots · Trucks

Analytics & Reports

Detailed analytics, executive PDF report, Excel exports.

Administration

Audit log · Backup · License · Company Identity · Appearance & Languages

The **Collapse menu** button at the bottom of the menu (or the **Ctrl+B** shortcut) shrinks the menu to its icons to save space. The software version number is shown at the bottom of the menu (for example `v1.1.6`).

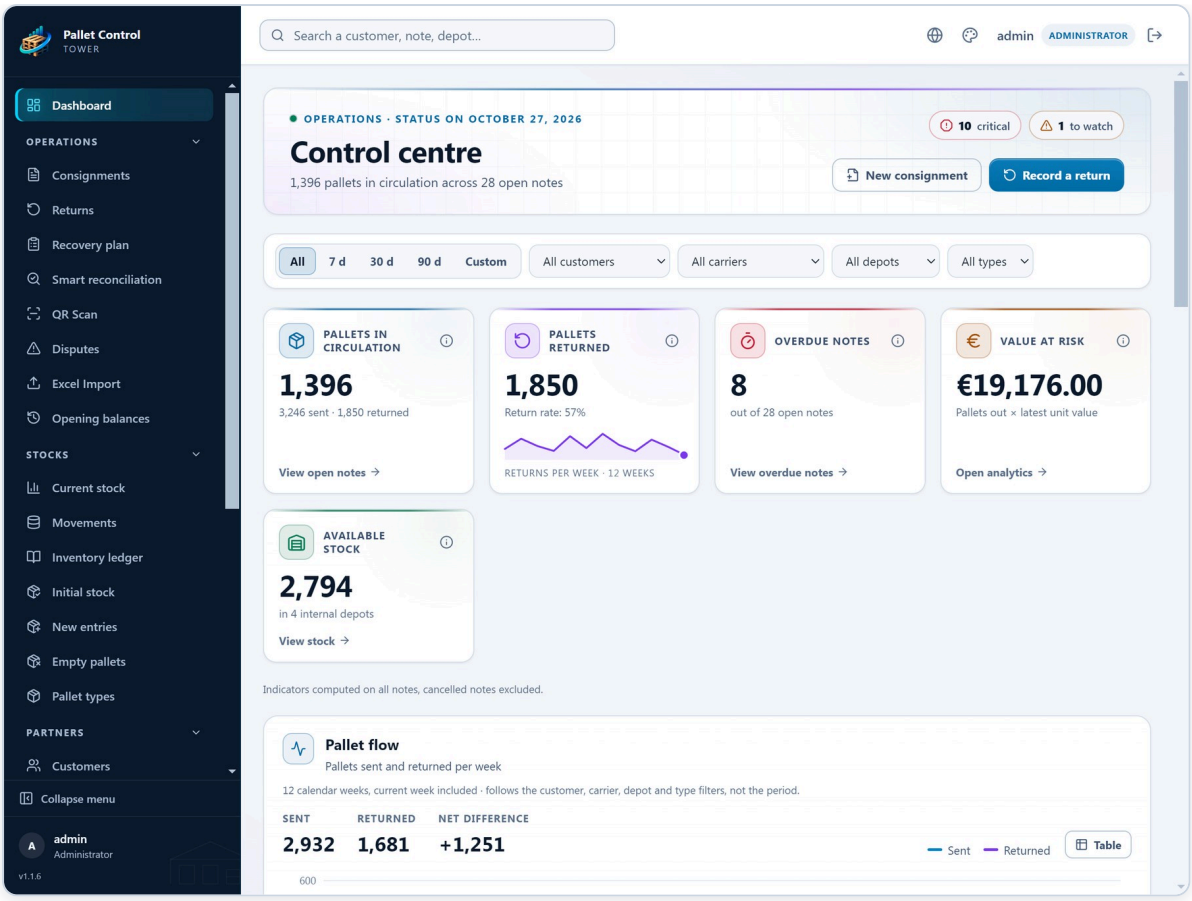


Figure 3 — NEXUS interface: side menu, top bar and Control centre

The top bar

- **Global search**: type the name of a customer, depot, carrier or driver, a truck plate or a note number, then click the result to open it.
- **Globe: language**. Six languages are available: French, English, Spanish, German, Arabic and Portuguese.
- **Palette: theme**. *Classic interface* (Enterprise Light, Industrial Dark, Royal Blue) or *NEXUS interface* (NEXUS — Command Center, NEXUS — Professional). The change is immediate, does not affect any data and is kept at the next start.
- Your username, your role and the **Log out** button.

Language and theme can also be set in Administration › Appearance & Languages.

One window only

The software opens only once: if you double-click the shortcut again while it is already running, the existing window comes back to the front. Closing the window stops the software completely.

6 Initial setup: company, partners, pallets

Before creating your first note, enter the basic information once and for all. The recommended order is the order of this chapter.

6.1 Company Identity

Administration › Company Identity. This information appears on your consignment notes, return notes, PDF reports, Excel exports and emails.

- **General information**: official company name, tax ID (optional), address, country, phone, email, website, main brand colour.
- **Logo**: `Choose a file` button. PNG, JPG or SVG, 2 MB maximum. A PNG or JPG logo also appears in PDFs; an SVG logo appears on screen and in emails.
- **Document header and footer**: default texts for the documents the software generates.
- The **Live preview** shows the result before saving. Click `Save` to confirm.

`Restore default values` clears all of this information, including the logo, after you confirm.

6.2 Pallet types

Stocks › Pallet types, `New pallet type` button. For each type: a name, a **code** (for example EUR, CP3) and, if you wish, **minimum**, **safety** and **maximum** stock thresholds. These thresholds feed the low-stock alerts and the transfer recommendations.

6.3 Partners

In the Partners group, every list works the same way: an add button (for example `New customer`), search, edit, and `Deactivate` to hide a record without deleting it permanently.

List	Use
Customers	The customers who receive your pallets: contact details and contact person.
Depots	Your company's internal depots. Check the name before the first entries: a depot that already has stock movements or consignment notes **can no longer be renamed** (its history would stay under the old name). Its location and active status remain editable; if needed, create a new depot and deactivate the old one.
Carriers	Transport companies.
Drivers	Drivers, attached to a carrier or not (full name, licence number, independent driver).
Trucks	Vehicles: plate, model and carrier.

Clicking a customer opens their **account page**: total sent, total returned, current balance, value at risk, open, overdue and closed notes, average return delay, balance history and the list of their notes.

Customer account statement (PDF)

At the top right of the account page, the **PDF** button generates the customer's statement: a summary (total sent, total returned, outstanding balance, open, overdue and closed notes, value at risk, average return delay), then the list of all their notes with pallets sent, returned, balance and status. The **Excel** button next to it exports the statement to Excel.

- Access: Partners › Customers, then click the customer's name. The page also opens from global search, the dashboard or the analytics.
- The file is named `statement-<customer>-<date>.pdf`. Figures are those of the day it is generated.
- The PDF statement is written in English, whatever language is selected in the software.

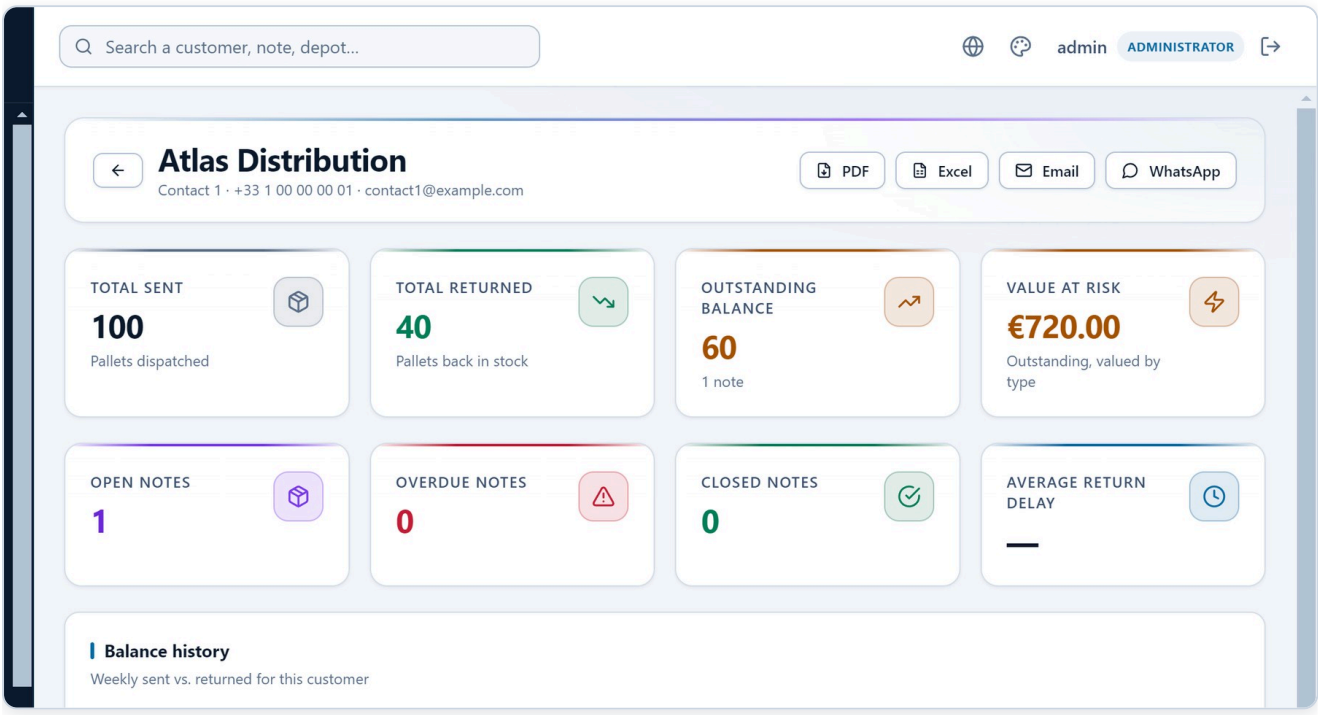


Figure 4 — Customer account: sent, returned, outstanding balance and value at risk

6.4 Initial stock

Stocks › Initial stock, **Add entry** button. Enter the pallets you already own at the go-live date: entry date, pallet type, location, quantity and **unit value (€)**. Click **Save entry** .

> **Remember the unit value**
> The unit value is used to calculate the value of the pallets that are outside (“Value at risk”, “Exposed value”). If it is not entered, the dashboard shows “Unit prices not set”.

6.5 Opening balances

Operations › Opening balances records the pallets **already held by your customers and carriers at go-live**. They count in outstanding balances, overdue and statements, with no exit from your depot.

1. Click **New balance** .

2. Enter the **Partner type** and the **Partner**, the pallet type, the **Quantity still due**, the **Takeover date** and the **Return depot**. The **Historical note #** and **Historical note date** are optional.
3. Click **Save balance**.

Enter only the quantity still due at the takeover date, not the history of shipments and returns. The balance creates an "Opening balance" ledger entry at the partner, with no exit from the depot; future returns go into the return depot. Ageing and overdue are calculated from the historical note date when known, otherwise from the takeover date. These notes carry the "Opening balance" badge and can also be imported from Excel (chapter 12).

7 Consignment notes

A consignment note records a pallet dispatch to a customer, a depot or a carrier. It stays "open" until all its pallets have come back.

Creating a note

1. Operations › Consignments, **New note** button.
2. **Movement information**: **Movement date**, **Origin** (chosen from the list of active depots, shown as "Name — Location"), **Delivery note No.** if you have one, **Recipient type** (customer, depot or carrier) and then the recipient itself. The note number is assigned automatically on save.
3. **Transport** (optional): carrier, driver, truck plate.
4. **Pallet lines**: **Add line** for each pallet type sent, with the quantity sent. At least one line is required.
5. Add a note if needed, then click **Create note**. The message "Note No. … created successfully" confirms it was saved.

Save draft lets you stop part-way: the draft is offered again the next time you open the form (**Discard draft** to start over).

> **The origin is always an active depot**
>
> Pallets leave the stock of the depot chosen as origin, and their returns come back to it. If there is no active depot, the form shows "No active depot is configured." with a **Create a depot** link. If a draft names a depot that is no longer active, a warning is shown and the note cannot be created until an active depot is selected. Existing notes keep their original origin.

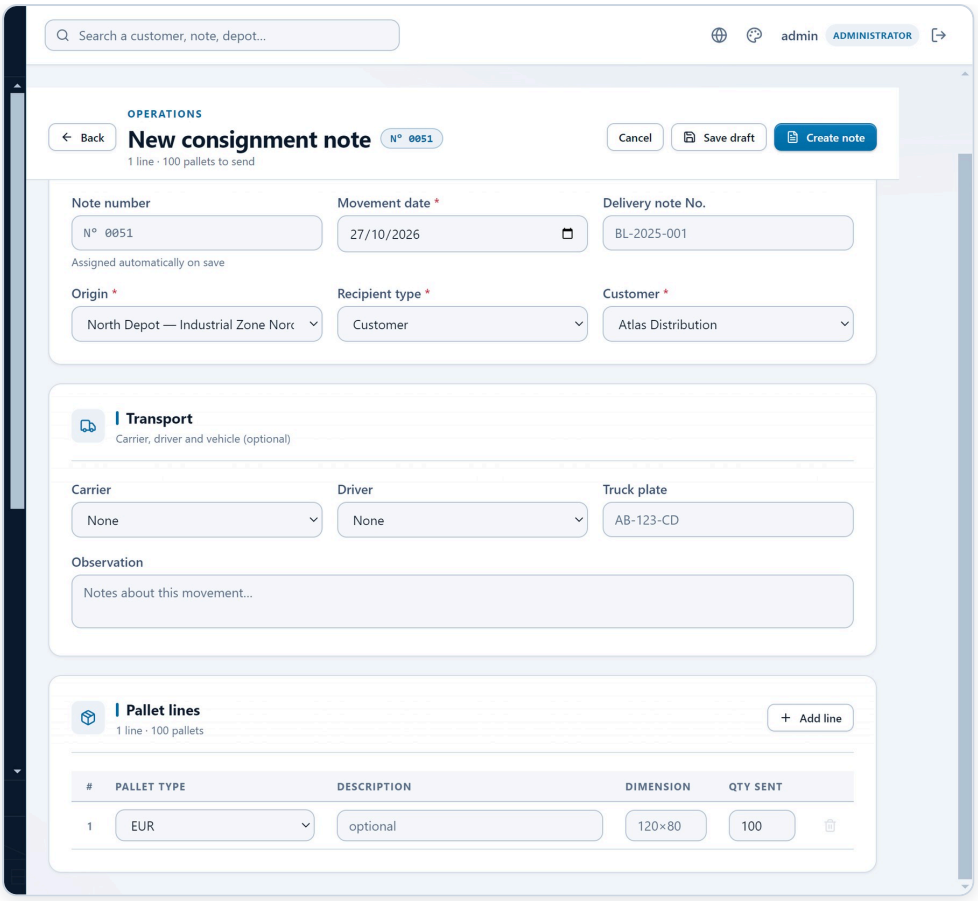


Figure 5 — Completed “New consignment note” form (origin, customer, line of 100 EUR pallets)

The list of notes

For each note the list shows: number, origin, destination, pallets sent, returned, balance and status. You can search by number, origin or destination, filter by status and recipient type, and export the list to PDF or Excel.

Status	Meaning
Not returned	No pallets have come back yet.
Partial	Some of the pallets have come back.
Closed	All the pallets have come back.
Overdue	The note is not closed and is past the return deadline.
Cancelled	The note was cancelled; it is kept for the record.

The note page

Click a note to open its page. It contains:

- **Download PDF** : the note as a PDF, with a **QR code** that lets you find it again with QR Scan. **Print** starts printing.
- **Edit** : correct the note's information (**Save changes**).

- `Duplicate`: create a new note from this one, dated today. Duplication is refused if the origin depot is no longer active: create a new note and select an active depot instead.
- **Signatures**: *Sender*, *Driver* and *Receiver* signature areas, signed with the mouse or on a touch screen (`Clear` to start again).
- **Photos**: `Add photo` to attach evidence (pallet condition, documents).
- **Return history** and **Revision history** (who changed what, and when).

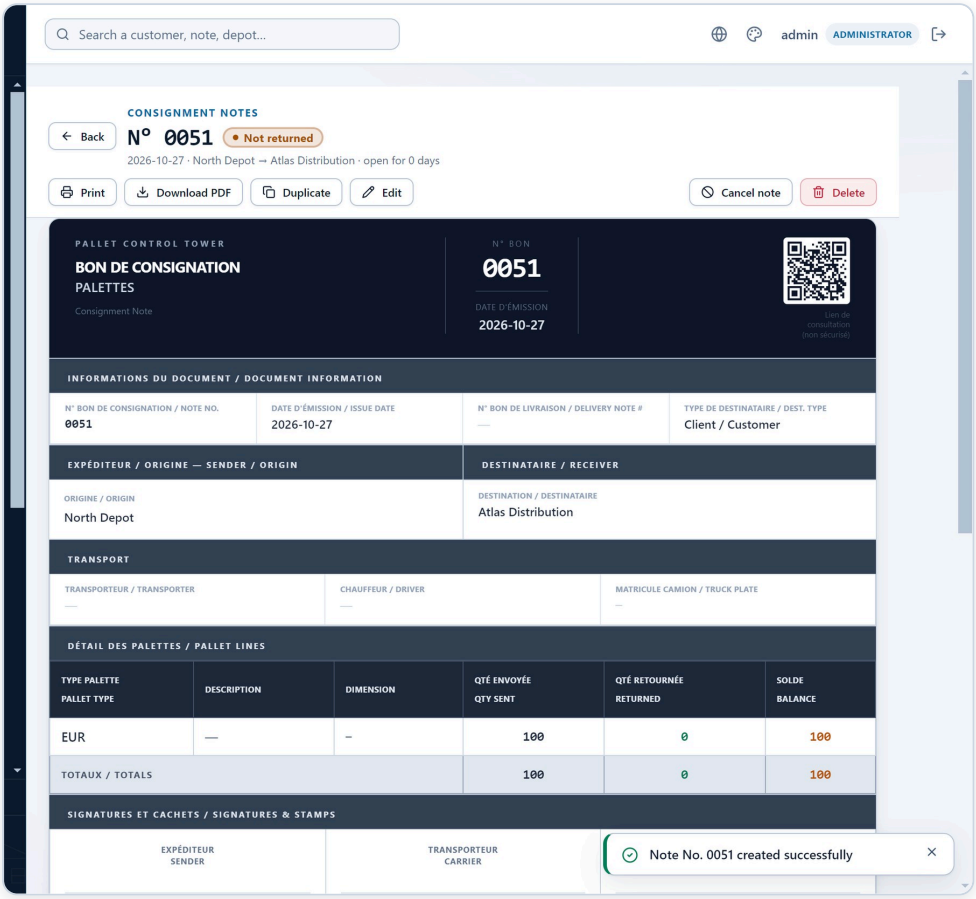


Figure 6 — Note page right after creation, with the confirmation message

Cancelling or deleting a note

- **Cancel** (`Cancel note`): the note's effect on stock is reversed, once, but the note is kept for audit. This is the method to use for a note entered by mistake.
- **Delete permanently**: only possible for a "blank" note, meaning cancelled, with no return, dispute, signature or attachment. A **reason** is required; it is recorded in the audit log together with a full copy of the note. Otherwise the software refuses the deletion and explains why.

8 Returns, recovery plan and QR scan

Recording a return

1. Operations › Returns: "Record a pallet return" screen.

2. **Step 1 — Find the consignment note**: search by number, origin or destination, or filter by customer, carrier or dates. Open notes are listed with their balance.

3. **Step 2 — Record the return**: choose the **Pallet line** (the remaining balance is shown), enter the **Quantity returned**, the number **Of which damaged** (non-conforming) and the **Return date**.

4. Click **Record return**. The note's balance and status are updated.

You cannot return more pallets than the line's balance: the maximum is shown next to the field. The **Return history** at the bottom of the screen lists every return and can be exported to PDF or Excel.

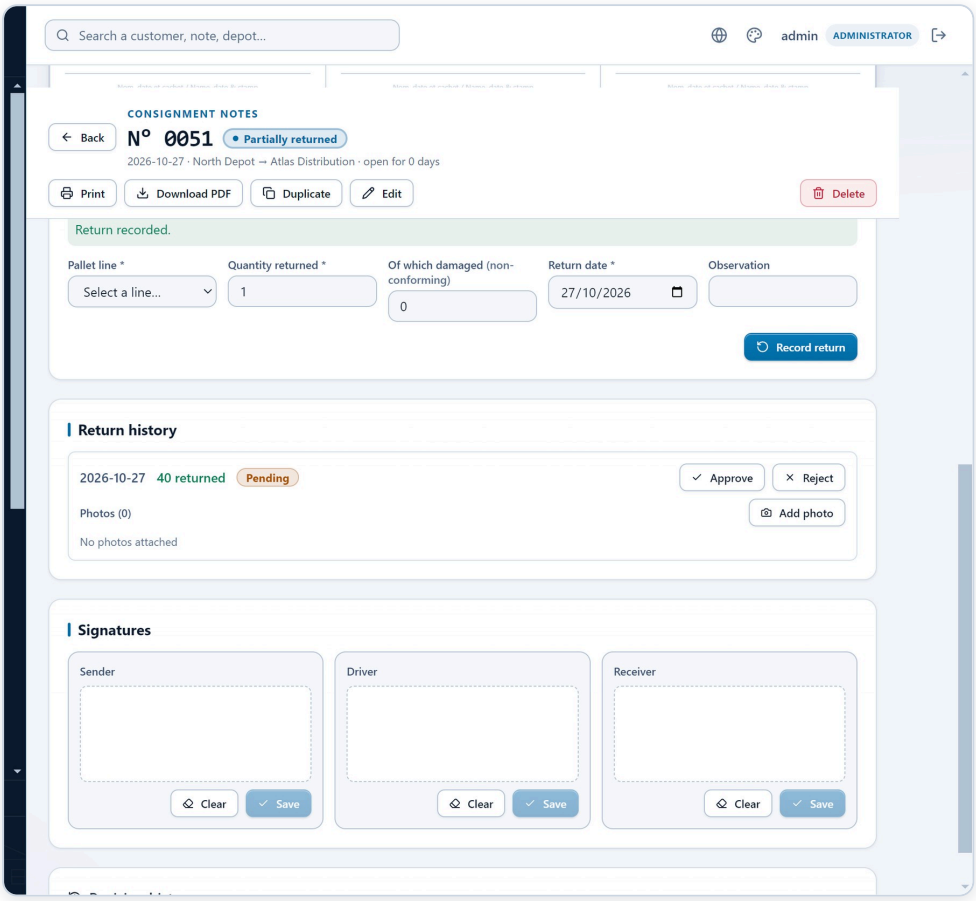


Figure 7 — Partial return of 40 pallets recorded: the note balance becomes 60

Reviewing a return

On the note page, each return in the history can be marked **Approve** or **Reject**. A decision can be reconsidered with **Reopen review**: the return goes back to “Pending review”, the previous decision stays in the audit log, and there is no effect on stock or on the customer balance.

Recovery plan

Operations › Recovery plan lists every open note with pallets still to recover, ranked by priority. This screen is read-only: it does not change any data.

Priority	Rule
Urgent	The note has the **Overdue** status, according to the return deadline configured in the software (30 days by default).
High	The note is not overdue and is 16 to 30 days old.
Normal	Other open notes with a positive balance.

- **At the top**: number of open notes, pallets to recover, urgent (and high) notes and exposed value.
- **Table**: priority, note number, date, age in days, recipient, balance, status and exposed value. Click a row to open the note, or a customer's name to open their account.
- **Filters**: customer, priority and overdue (all, overdue only, not overdue). **Sort** by age or by balance; urgent notes always stay at the top.
- **Exposed value**: balance × latest unit value recorded for each pallet type. It shows “Not available” if a unit value is missing or if the Advanced analytics module is not included in your licence. The total appears only if every displayed row is valued.
- **Export**: the `PDF` button produces the recovery plan with exactly the rows displayed (priority, references, dates, age, balances and statuses), with no per-note value. It is in French if the interface is in French, in English otherwise.

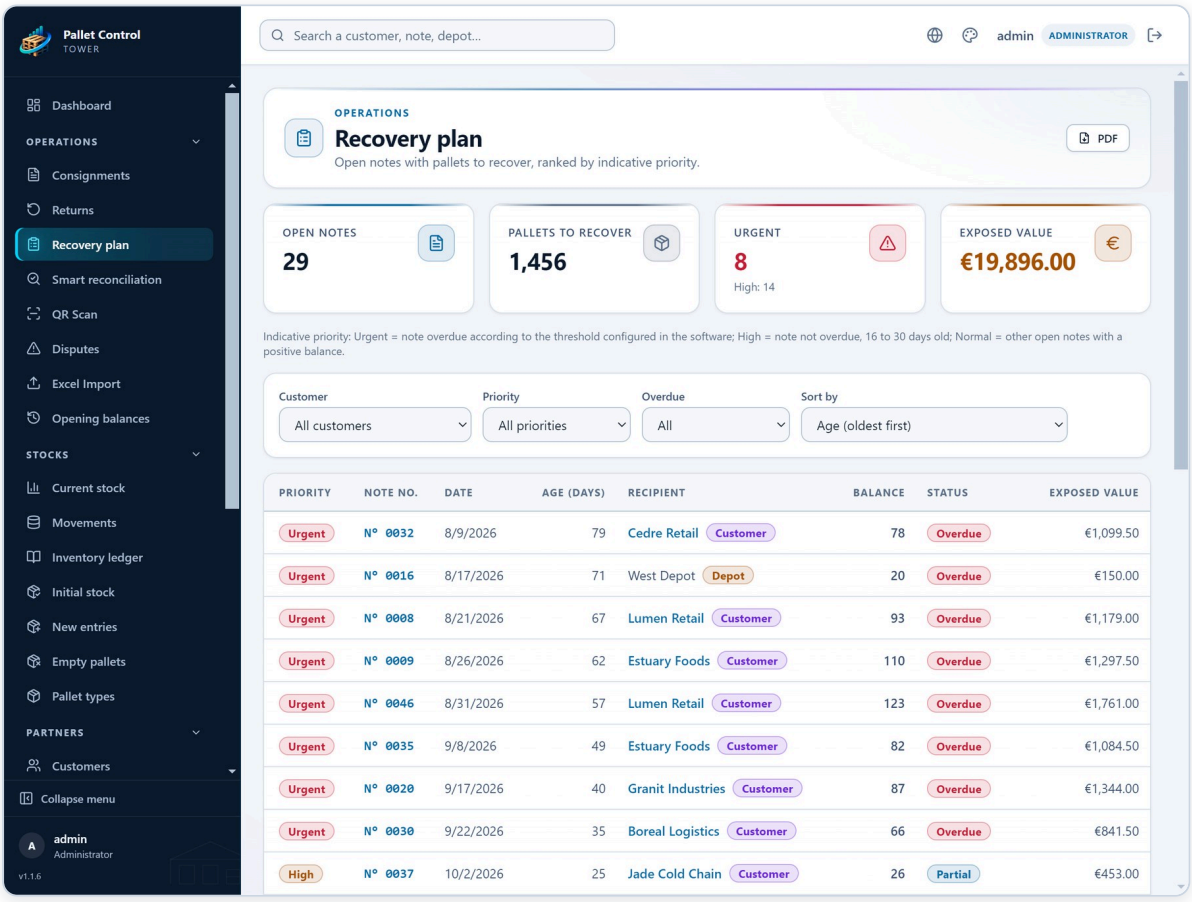


Figure 8 — Recovery plan: open notes ranked by priority, with exposed value

QR Scan

Operations › QR Scan opens the PC's camera. Hold the QR code printed on a consignment note in front of the camera: the matching note opens. This feature needs a camera. If the message “Cannot access the camera” appears, check that a camera is connected and allowed in Windows Settings › Privacy › Camera.

9 Stock and movements

Every dispatch, return, entry or adjustment is written to the ledger automatically. The screens of the Stocks group give different views of it.

Screen	Content and actions
Current stock	Real-time pallet balances by location and type: total, internal depots, available, pallets held externally and total value. Filters by location, location type and pallet type. PDF and Excel export. A row **in red** shows negative stock: more pallets left this location than were recorded in the software (initial stock not entered, or an input error). It is counted in the totals.
Movements	“Movement database”: every consignment note with its pallet flows, truck, pallet types and age in days. Search, filters (status, dates…) and export.
Inventory ledger	Every entry: initial stock, new entry, consignment out, return, adjustment. Totals in and out, filters and export. **Manual adjustment** button to correct an inventory discrepancy (see chapter 10).
Initial stock	The balances that existed at go-live (chapter 6.4).
New entries	Acquisitions after go-live, with **Add entry** : entry type (Purchase, Container unloading, Supplier delivery, Inventory adjustment, Transfer in, Other), receiving depot, supplier or source, reference document, quantity and unit value.
Empty pallets	Breakdown by condition (available, damaged, repairable, lost, destroyed, reserved), stock forecast (4-week moving average, weeks until shortfall) and transfer recommendations between depots based on the pallet type thresholds. PDF and Excel export.
Pallet types	The types and their thresholds (chapter 6.2).

Deleting an initial stock entry or a new entry also removes the matching ledger row. You are asked to confirm first.

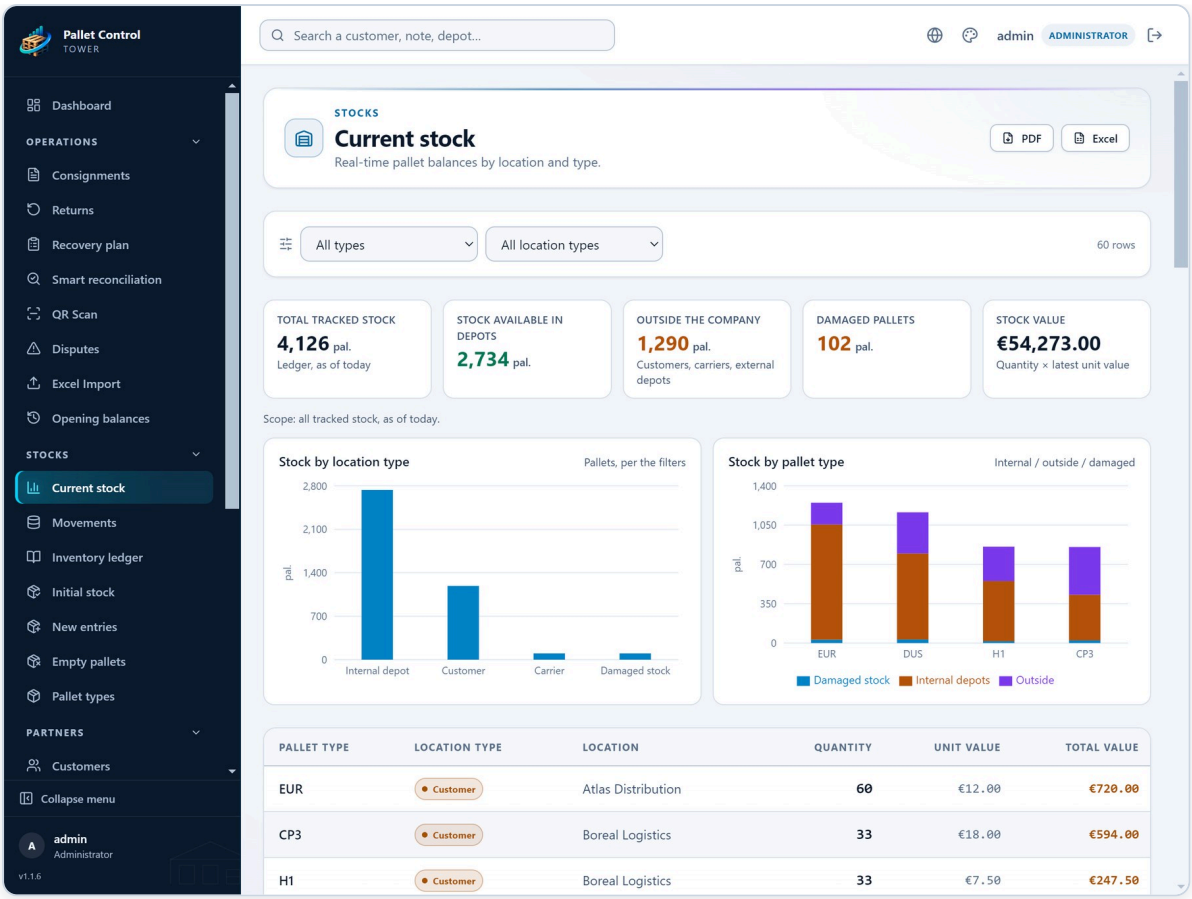


Figure 9 — Current stock: indicators, charts and detail by location

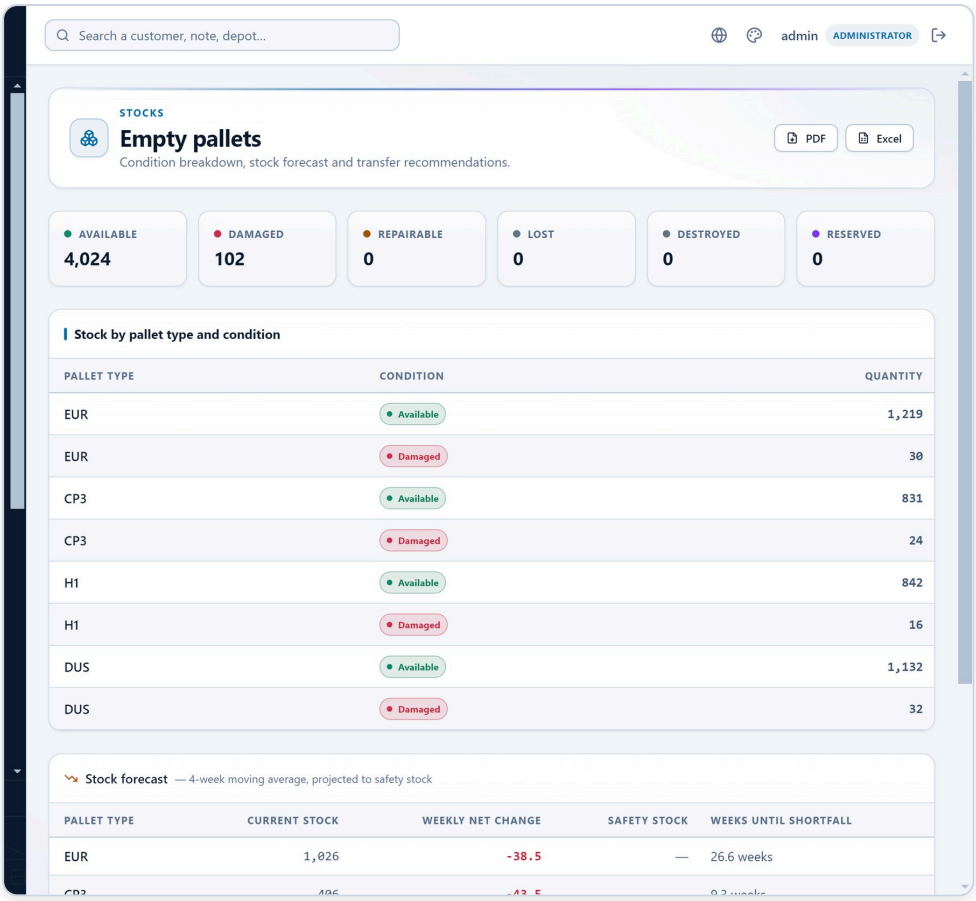


Figure 10 — Empty pallets: breakdown by condition and stock forecast

10 Discrepancies, disputes and claims

The software distinguishes three situations: pallets that come back damaged, disagreements with a partner, and differences between counted stock and recorded stock.

Pallets returned damaged

Enter them in the **Of which damaged** field when you record the return (chapter 8).

Inventory difference

Stocks › Inventory ledger, **Manual adjustment** button: pallet type, location, quantity in or out, and reason.

Creating a dispute

1. Operations › Disputes, **New dispute** button.
2. Search for and select the **consignment note** concerned.
3. Choose the **Dispute type** : *Missing*, *Damaged*, *Transport* or *Financial*.
4. Write the description (required), then click **Create dispute** .

Following up and closing a dispute

Open the dispute from the list. The statuses are: **Open**, **Investigating**, **Resolved** and **Rejected**.

- **Mark as investigating** shows that the dispute is being handled.
- Add **Evidence photos**.
- To close it: enter the **Resolution notes** and, if needed, the **Compensation amount (€, optional)**, then click **Resolve** or **Reject**.

The list of disputes can be filtered by status and exported to PDF or Excel.

Generating a claim letter (PDF)

From a dispute's page, the software prepares a claim letter addressed to the note's recipient.

1. Open Operations › Disputes and click the dispute.
2. In the **Claim letter** box, choose the **Letter language**: Français or English.
3. Click **Generate a claim PDF**. The file is saved as `claim-dispute-…-note-….pdf` (in French: `reclamation-litige-…-bon-….pdf`).

The letter contains your company's identity and logo (Administration › Company Identity), the date, the recipient (name, contact and address from the customer record; location for a depot), the dispute and note references, the subject, the dispute description, the note's status (pallets sent, returned and balance per type) and a request to check or settle the matter.

> **Good to know**
>
> - The letter **does not change stock, balances or invoicing**: it is a document, nothing is recorded.
> - **Photos are not attached** to the letter, and the compensation amount does not appear in it.
> - Missing information (recipient address, your company identity) is left out, and a message tells you so. Carrier records have no address field.
> - The dispute description is reproduced as it was entered.

11 Dashboard, search, analytics and exports

The dashboard

The dashboard's appearance depends on the chosen theme. With a *Classic interface* theme you see the classic dashboard. With a *NEXUS* theme you see the **Control centre**. Both show the same real data.

Until the basic setup is complete, the **Getting started** card appears at the top of the dashboard: 5 steps (pallet types, depots, customers, initial stock, first note), each ticked automatically once done, with an **Open** button to the relevant screen. It disappears once the 5 steps are done; **Hide** removes it earlier.

- **Indicators**: pallets in circulation, returned pallets and return rate, overdue notes, value at risk (or exposed value), open notes, available stock. Click an indicator to open the details.

- **Filters**: period (All, 7, 30 or 90 days, or custom), customer, carrier, depot, pallet type, and `Reset`.
- **Charts**: dispatches and returns over the last 12 weeks, breakdown by pallet type, top 5 customers, age of open notes (Recovery Radar in NEXUS).
- **Alerts**: overdue notes, a customer above their threshold, notes open for more than 30 days, low stock, high exposed value. Each alert can be marked `Resolve` or `Dismiss`.
- **Shortcuts** to create a consignment or record a return.

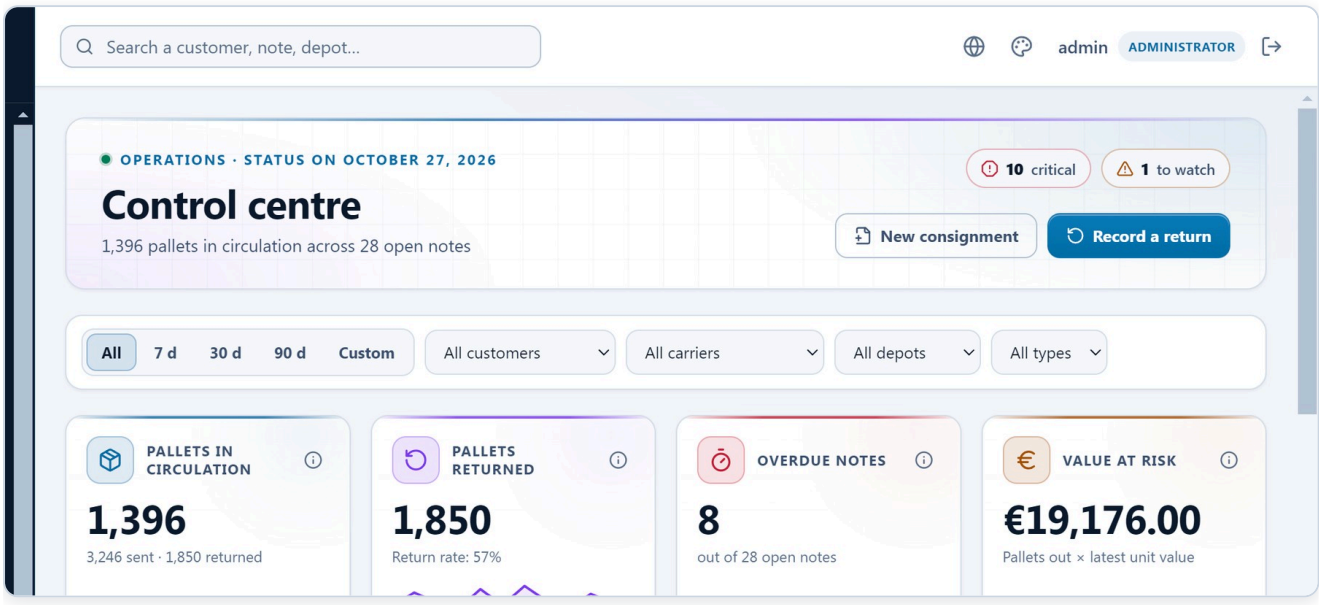


Figure 11 — NEXUS Control centre: key indicators and filters

Global search

The search field at the top of every screen finds customers, depots, carriers, drivers, trucks and consignment notes.

Analytics & Reports

Analytics & Reports brings together the detailed analytics, which can be filtered by date, recipient type and pallet type: indicators, aging, return rate, return composition, ageing heatmap, comparisons by carrier and by customer, and key insights.

Daily executive report (PDF): `Preview the PDF` button. This is an A4 landscape summary for management, built from the same figures as the dashboard. The report opens directly in the software, in a preview window where you can scroll through the pages, zoom and print. The `Download PDF` button in that window saves the file wherever you choose. Close the preview with the cross or the Esc key.

Available **exports**:

Report	Format	Content
Executive summary	PDF	Indicators, aging and alerts on one page. This document is currently written in English (“Dashboard Summary”), whatever the software language.

Report	Format	Content
Consignment list	Excel	Every note: sent, returned, balance, status.
Open balances	Excel	The notes that are not yet fully returned.
Overdue report	Excel	Notes past the deadline, ranked by days open.
Customer balance report	Excel	Outstanding pallets per customer.
Depot report	Excel	Outstanding pallets per destination depot.
Return performance report	Excel	Return rate and balance per carrier.
Monthly settlement report	Excel	Sent, returned and net balance change over 12 months.
Inventory condition report	Excel	Stock by pallet type and condition.

Most lists in the software (notes, returns, movements, stock, ledger, empty pallets, disputes, partners) also have their own **PDF** and **Excel** export buttons. Excel files are formatted (your company letterhead, filters, frozen headers, totals). An export that would exceed 50,000 rows is refused rather than truncated: narrow the filters.

Per-screen analytics: the Customers, Carriers, Drivers, Depots, Trucks, Returns and Disputes screens show indicators and rankings for the selected period (`All` , `30 d` , `90 d` , `12 mo`). The exact scope is stated under each analysis.

On the list screens and on the Returns screen, these indicators are grouped in the **Indicators and charts** section, collapsed by default so that the list or form stays in view: click `Show` to open it. The choice is remembered for each screen.

> **Email settings (optional)**
>
> The “Automatic reports — email settings” section lets you save a mail server (Secure SMTP or Microsoft 365) and a distribution list. **This version does not send any email automatically**: only the `Send a test email` button actually sends a message, and it needs a network connection. The rest of the software does not. The `Preview the message` button shows the email as it would be sent, in a preview window inside the software, without sending anything.

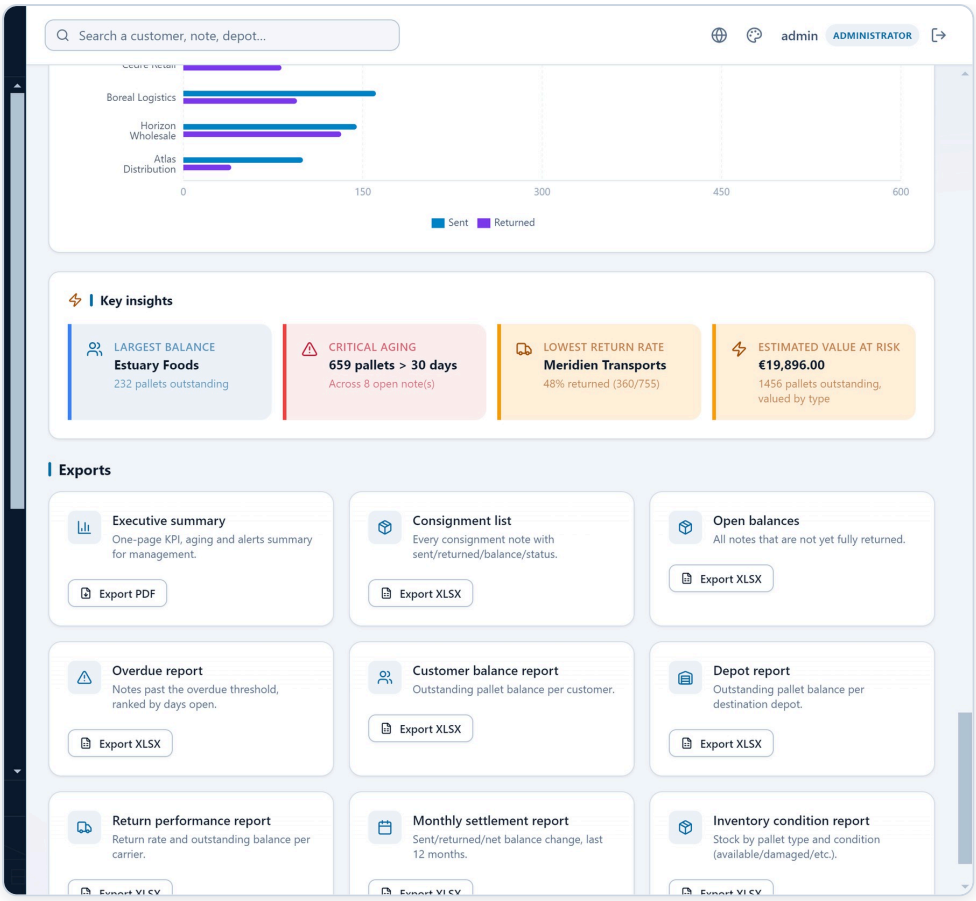


Figure 12 — Analytics & Reports: key insights and PDF / Excel exports

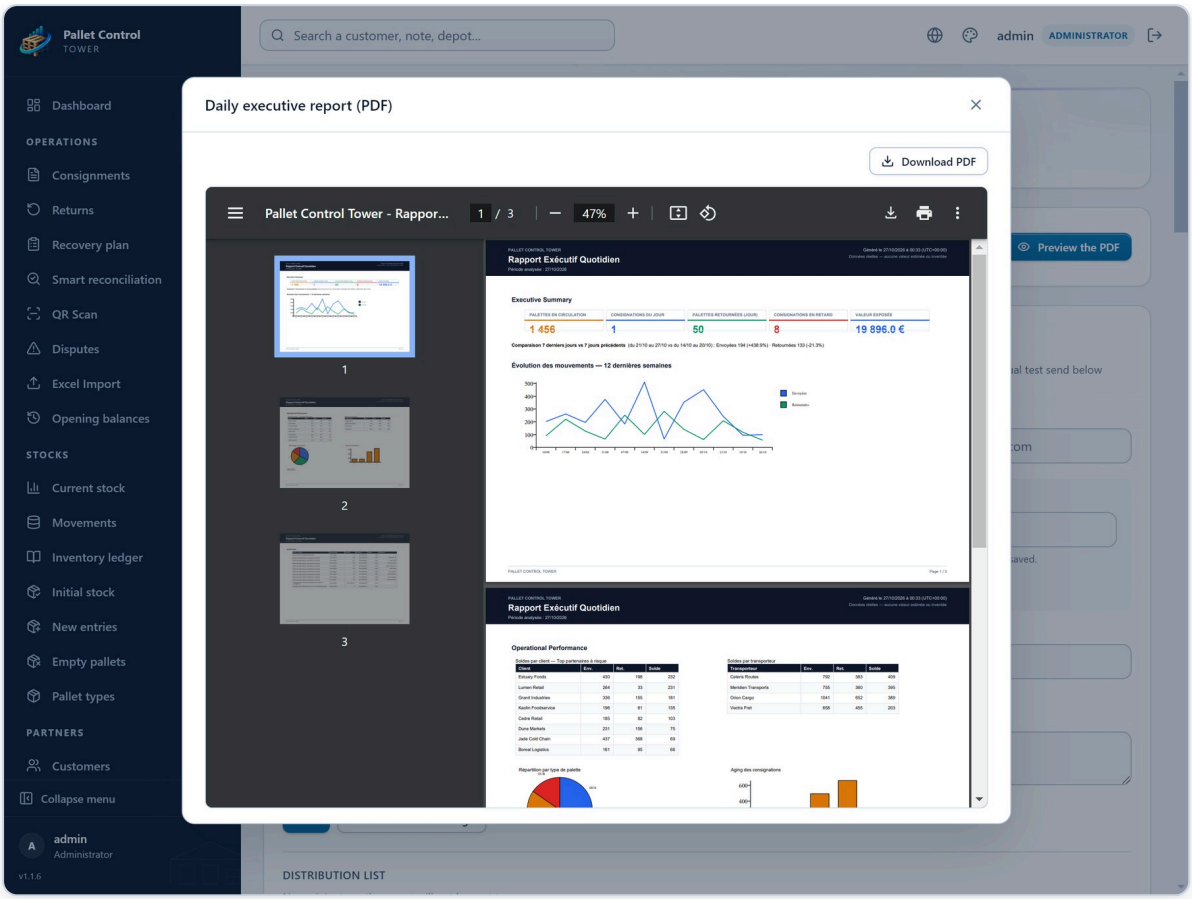


Figure 13 — Executive report preview inside the software, with the Download PDF button

Note: the executive report shown here is currently generated in French by the software.

12 Excel import and audit log

Importing data from Excel

Operations › Excel Import lets you bring in existing data. The accepted data types are grouped in two families:

- **Initial migration**: **Customers**, **Carriers** and **Depots** (new records only; existing records are never changed), **Initial stock** (one per depot and pallet type) and **Opening balances** (pallets already at your partners at go-live);
- **Day-to-day operations**: **Consignments** (one note, with one pallet line per Excel row), **Returns** linked to an existing note by its number, and **Stock movements** (new entries: purchases, supplier deliveries…).

1. **Type of data to import.**
2. **Choose the file (.xlsx)** with `Choose an Excel file`. No file yet? `Download the Excel template`, right next to it, gives a ready-to-fill template for the selected type (see below).
3. **Column mapping**: match each column of your file to the expected field. A preview of the first 10 rows is shown. Then click `Validate the data`.

4. **Validation report**: the number of accepted rows and the list of rejected rows, each with its reason. **Download rejected rows (.xlsx)** gives the full list. Tick the confirmation, then click **Confirm the import** to import the accepted rows.

Cells in Excel date format are always read correctly. For dates typed as text, choose the **Format of dates typed as text** (DD/MM/YYYY or MM/DD/YYYY): an ambiguous date is rejected rather than guessed.

For consignments, the **origin** must match the name of an active depot (case and leading or trailing spaces ignored); the note is saved with the depot's exact name. An unknown, inactive or ambiguous origin rejects the row.

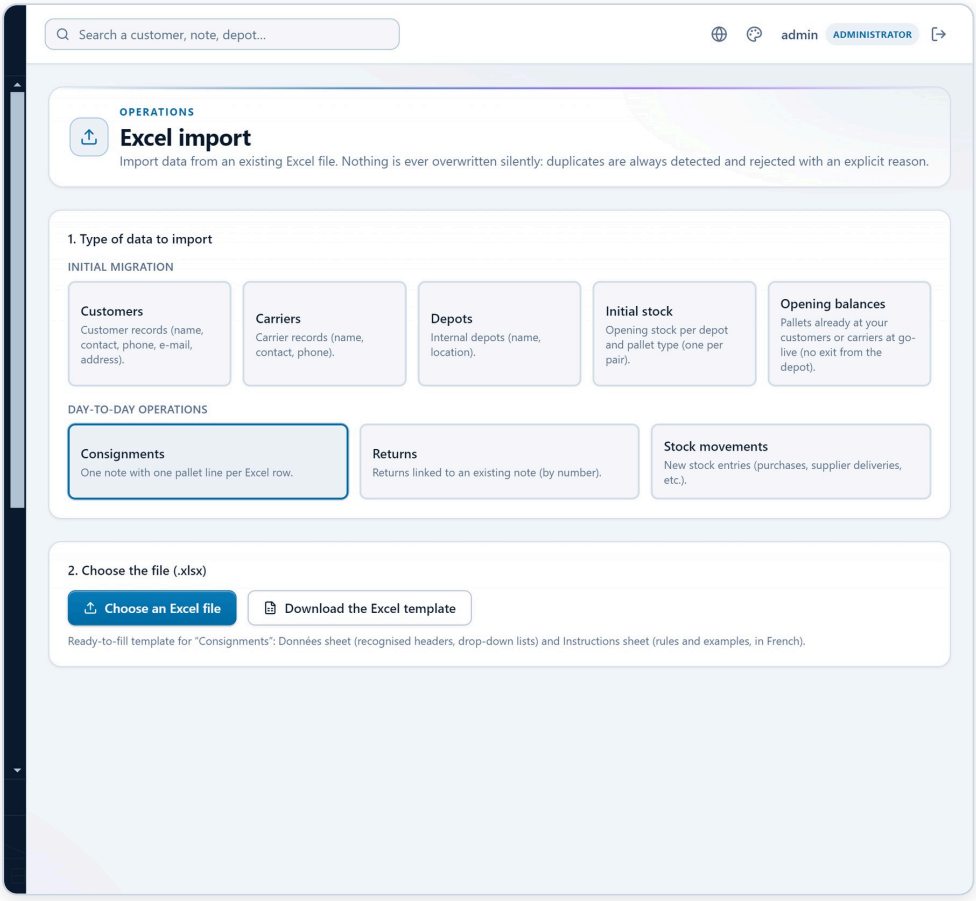


Figure 14 — Excel import: choosing the data type and the file

Downloadable Excel templates

For each of the 8 data types, the **Download the Excel template** button gives a ready-to-fill `modele-import-….xlsx` file:

- **Données** sheet: the header row, recognised automatically by the import. **Dark blue** headers: required columns; **grey** headers: optional. Hover over a header for the details of its column. Formats are already set (DD/MM/YYYY dates, whole numbers, amounts, text that keeps leading zeros such as `0053`), with drop-down lists for the codes and for your existing depots, customers, carriers and pallet types;
- **Instructions** sheet: the columns, two examples, the validation and duplicate rules, and the recommended import order.

Enter your data in the Données sheet from row 2 without changing the headers, save the file and import it. The Données sheet is read even if the file was saved with another sheet displayed. The drop-down lists reflect your data at download time: another value is still possible and the import checks it. The template content is in French.

> **No risk of overwriting**
>
> No data is overwritten without telling you: duplicates are always detected and rejected, with an explicit reason. **A full backup is created automatically just before saving**; if it fails, the import is blocked and nothing is changed. An import cannot be undone from this screen: to go back, restore that backup (Administration › Backup).

Audit log

Administration › Audit log (administrators only) lists every create, update and delete: who, when and what changed. You can filter by data type and by action.

13 Backup and restore

Administration › Backup screen. A backup contains the database **and** the attached photos. This screen stays available even without an active licence.

Manual backup

“New backup” box, **Back up now** button. The software copies the database and attachments into a timestamped folder, then checks the copy's integrity. The message “Backup created successfully.” confirms it. A copy that fails the check is deleted and reported.

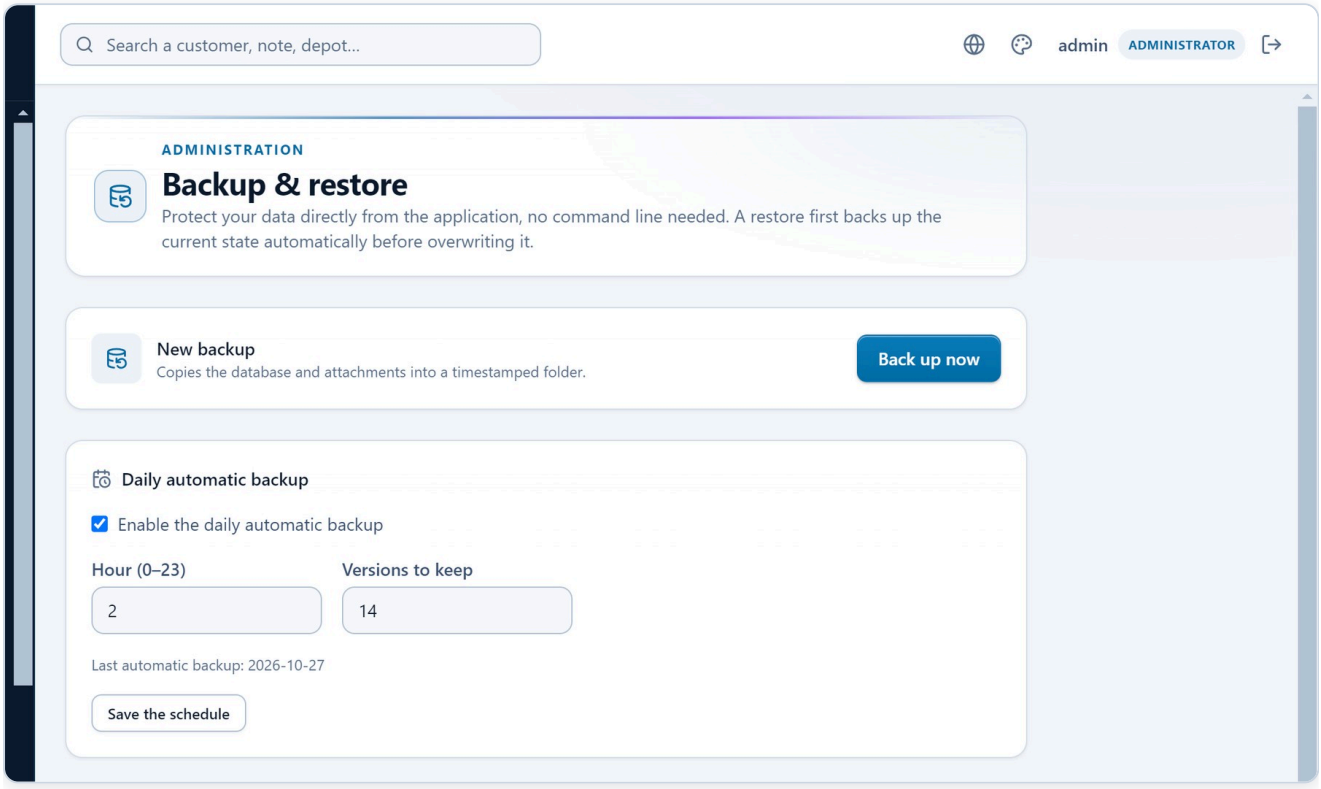


Figure 15 — Backup and restore: manual and automatic backups

Daily automatic backup

1. Tick **Enable the daily automatic backup**.
2. Set the **Hour (0–23)** from which the day's backup should be made.
3. Set the number of **Versions to keep** (1 to 365). Older backups beyond that number are deleted automatically.
4. Click **Save the schedule**.

How it works

- The automatic backup runs **at most once a day**, at the chosen hour or later, **while the software is open**.
- **Catch-up**: if a scheduled backup was missed because the software was closed, it runs about one minute after the software is next opened, **even before the usual hour**. Only **one** catch-up backup is created, however many days were missed.
- The date of the last automatic backup is shown below the settings.
- The number of versions to keep applies to ordinary backups, manual and automatic. **"Before restore" copies are never deleted automatically**: they build up, one per restore. As the software has no delete button, they can only be removed by hand in `%APPDATA%\Pallet Control Tower\data\backups`; ask support before doing so.

Copying a backup off the PC

Backups are stored on the same disk as your data: they protect you against a data-entry mistake, but not against a failure or theft of the PC. For that:

1. In **"Available backups"**, click **Copy to…** next to the backup you want.
2. Choose a folder on a USB drive, an external disk or a network share.
3. The software creates a `pallet-control-tower-backup-YYYYMMDD_HHMMSS` folder there and confirms the path.

Recommendation

Make at least **one external copy a week**, and keep it away from the PC, ideally away from the office. Keep a copy of your `.lic` licence file with it.

Restoring a backup

1. In **"Available backups"**, click **Restore** next to the backup you want (date and time shown).
2. Confirm with **Yes, restore**, or click **Cancel**.
3. Before replacing anything, the software automatically backs up the current state. That copy appears in the list with the **"Before restore"** label, so you can go back.
4. The message "Restore complete. The application is restarting…" appears, then the software reloads on its own.

If the software does not reload within 30 seconds, close it and relaunch it from the Desktop shortcut. A damaged backup is refused: it can never replace valid data. On the same PC, the licence stays valid after a restore.

14 PC change, failure or replacement

The licence is bound to one computer and the data is stored on that computer only. **There is no automatic transfer**, of either the licence or the data: every change goes through support.

Situations and what to do

Situation	What happens?	What to do
Restart, Windows update, added memory or disk, network card change	Nothing: the licence stays valid.	No action.
Reinstalling the software on the same Windows	Data is kept.	If the software asks for the licence, import your `.lic` file again.
Windows reinstall or PC reset	The PC identifier changes. The old licence no longer works.	Licence transfer through support (see below).
New PC (replacement)	New PC identifier.	Licence transfer through support (see below).
PC failure	The data is on the failed PC's disk.	Get your latest external copy, then follow the procedure below.
Database copied to another PC	The licence is refused there.	Licence transfer through support.

Before a planned change

1. On the old PC: Administration › Backup, **Back up now**, then **Copy to...** a USB drive or external disk.
2. Check that the `pallet-control-tower-backup-…` folder is really on the drive.

On the new PC (or after a Windows reinstall)

1. Install the software (chapter 2) and create the administrator account (chapter 3).
2. In Administration › License, copy the computer's **new identifier**.
3. Write to **palletcontroltower@outlook.com** with: your company name, your order or licence reference, the old identifier if you know it, the new identifier, and the reason (new PC, failure, Windows reinstall).
4. Support sends you a new `.lic` file for the new PC. Import it as in chapter 4.
5. To recover your data from your external copy, **support guides you step by step**. This recovery is not automated in the Backup screen.

Without an external copy, recovery is not guaranteed

If the PC fails and no copy was made off that PC, your data can only be recovered if the original disk can still be read. The data folder is `%APPDATA%\Pallet Control Tower`. This is why regular external copies (chapter 13) are essential.

15 Troubleshooting

Problem or message	Solution
"Windows protected your PC" during installation	Click **More info**, then **Run anyway** (chapter 2).
The software keeps sending me to the License screen	No valid licence is active on this PC. Import your `.lic` file (chapter 4) or read the reason shown under the licence status.
"This licence is bound to another computer..."	PC change or Windows reinstall: see chapter 14.
"Invalid username or password"	Check what you typed and the Caps Lock key. If you have forgotten it, contact support.
Message saying the backend did not start correctly (shown in French)	Close the software, wait a few seconds and relaunch it. If the problem persists, restart the PC. If the message comes back again, send support the contents of the `%APPDATA%\Pallet Control Tower\logs` folder.
Message saying the backend cannot be found and the installation looks incomplete (shown in French)	Run `PALLET-CONTROL-TOWER-Setup.exe` again to reinstall. Your data is kept.
Message saying the backend service stopped unexpectedly (shown in French)	The software first tries to restart the service on its own. If this message appears, close and relaunch the software: your data is kept.
Screen stuck on "Restarting..." after a restore	Wait 30 seconds, then close the software and relaunch it from the Desktop shortcut.
Double-clicking the shortcut opens no new window	The software is already open: its window comes back to the front. Look in the taskbar.
"Cannot access the camera"	Connect a camera and allow access in Windows Settings › Privacy › Camera.
Rows rejected during an Excel import	Read each row's reason in the validation report, correct the file, then click **Start over**.
"Permanent deletion refused"	The note has returns, a dispute, signatures, photos or stock movements: use **Cancel note** instead.
"Unit prices not set" on the dashboard	Enter the unit value in the initial stock or new entries (chapter 6.4).

Problem or message	Solution
“Business edition required” on an analysis	Your licence does not include this module. Check Administration › License and contact support if needed.

16 Support

For any question, licence request, licence transfer or difficulty, contact support by email.

PALLET CONTROL TOWER SUPPORT

palletcontroltower@outlook.com

For a quick answer, include

- your company name and your order or licence reference;
- the software version (shown at the bottom of the left-hand menu, for example `v1.1.6`);
- the computer identifier (Administration › License);
- a description of the problem, the exact message shown, and a screenshot if possible;
- if support asks for them, the files in the `%APPDATA%\Pallet Control Tower\logs` folder.

Never share your password: support never needs it. Do not send your database either, unless support explicitly asks for it to solve a problem.