



The Beginner's Guide to Freight Shipping



Are you a new business owner that needs to ship your products to your customer? Or perhaps your business has grown to the point where you're going to start shipping? Maybe you are already shipping freight, but want to do so more efficiently with a better understanding of the process?

If you answered **Yes** to any of these questions, this book is for you. It will introduce you to the freight shipping industry and get you the information you need to master the freight world. Let's start with a definition of "Freight Shipping."

FREIGHT SHIPPING is the transportation of goods from one location to another, usually by a commercial carrier. In Canada, it is a multi-billion dollar industry and a pillar of the Canadian economy. Goods can be transported by rail, truck, plane, or boat, though for our purposes we'll be focusing on **LESS THAN TRUCKLOAD (LTL)** and **TRUCKLOAD** shipping

Over the course of this e-book, we'll get you up to date on everything you need to know about the domestic freight and shipping industry. We'll discuss the difference between carriers and brokers, and dive into the mechanics of the freight and shipping industry. We'll cover the two basic categories of domestic freight shipping: LTL and Truckload shipping, and their similarities and differences in terms of pricing, documentation, insurance, billing, transit times, and much more

At the end of the e-book, you'll find **FAQs** that we've encountered through our years in the business, as well as a glossary of shipping terms. As you read, certain terms will be **HIGHLIGHTED**. You'll be able to find the definitions of these terms in the Glossary. You'll also find links to blog posts we've created throughout the text, as well as instructional Freight Papers.

We've created this e-book for those of you looking to incorporate shipping into your everyday business practices, but this information can also be applied to someone looking to do a one-time freight shipment. Regardless of where you're coming to freight from, this e-book will get you set up with everything you need to know about LTL and Truckload freight shipping

Don't be discouraged if at first, this seems like a lot. With a little practice, freight can be easily understood and can help grow your business by leaps and bounds when managed properly.

Let's get started!

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Chapter 1: Carrier vs. Broker

In this chapter, we'll discuss carriers, dispatchers, and drivers that will be handling your freight on a daily basis. We'll also discuss freight brokers, and how they differ from carriers.

Throughout this book, we'll be referencing the terms **CARRIER** and **FREIGHT BROKER** regularly, so it's important to define them early. As you'll see, the terms are not synonymous, but they do complement each other. Together they act as the building blocks of the freight shipping industry. Let's start with the carriers.

The aptly named **FREIGHT CARRIER** is a company that owns and operates a fleet of trucks that move freight from point A to point B. They are the foundation of the freight industry, and vary in size and scope, from small local carriers with a limited number of trucks that service niche geographical areas, to national carriers with hundreds of trucks at their disposal and hubs across the country.



For example, let's look at our

company (Willy's Trucking Service). Willy's Trucking Service is a mid-size LTL carrier that specializes in moving freight across Alberta and British Columbia.

You'll also encounter national carriers, such as YRC Freight. YRC is one of the largest LTL carriers in the country. They service most parts of Canada, from Yukon to Quebec and everything in between. YRC Freight is a good example of a carrier that can move your freight from coast to coast, using their own trucks and drivers throughout transit.

These LTL carriers are divided into many different departments designed to streamline the shipping process. Let's start at the beginning, with the **DRIVERS** and trucks. Drivers are often regionally based, shuttling freight from residences and businesses to their local terminal, where another driver will move the freight to the next terminal.

Next, we have the **DISPATCHERS**, the men, and women who designate where and when their drivers need to pick up and deliver freight. These dispatchers are in constant contact with their drivers, confirming pickups and deliveries are completed and scheduled correctly.

There is also a **CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT**, made up of representatives who handle most of the incoming pickup requests as well as tracking any shipments that are currently in transit. Carrier customer service teams are capable of assisting customers in a number of ways and are often the first responders for any issues that might occur.

As we'll discuss later, sometimes freight can be damaged, lost, or delivered short, and most carriers have an **OS&D** department. OS&D stands for Overages, Shortages, and Damages, and they'll be the one to handle any issues of damage or loss with your shipments. Luckily we at Willy's Trucking Service have a Damage Free Guarantee for freight up to 5,000 pounds. (we will touch on this later).

We'll discuss freight carriers in more detail as we make our way through this book, but let's switch sides and take a look at freight brokers, specifically what they are and what they do.

A **FREIGHT BROKER** is a third party company that acts as a bridge between freight carriers and freight customers. The biggest misconception for a freight beginner is that these two (Brokers and Carriers) are one in the same. They are not. A simple way that I like to think of it is this: If the freight industry is a giant machine, the freight carriers are the moving parts, and the freight brokers are the oil.

It's important to understand the term "third party" when dealing with a freight broker. While a freight carrier will physically be handling your freight on its shipping path, most of the time a freight broker will never actually see your freight (outside of an occasional picture). While there will always be geographic proximity between carrier and customer, a broker works remotely through a transportation management system that we'll discuss in greater detail later in this book. Brokers act as coordinators for your freight shipping, and though they won't be driving the trucks, a good freight broker will be every bit as "in the loop" as the dispatchers, drivers, and dockworkers.

As with any industry, there are varying levels of service delivered by freight carriers depending on the company, reputation, culture, etc. The first purpose of the freight carrier industry is associated with lower shipping rates due to customer relations. This service is offered by most freight carriers, and for some will serve as their primary and sole service. But how do customers get the best rate on their shipments? The simple answer is exclusivity. A freight carrier will want to keep your business for as long as they can thus dropping their prices for an exclusive right to ship your goods. So by signing up to open a free account with a carrier, there are a few perks associated with shipping with your local carrier.

The second service that a good freight carrier should provide is customer service. While some freight carriers are content to only offer their customers lowered shipping rates, other freight carriers (the good ones) consider the “cheaper rates” part of their service the necessary, but ultimately less-important, facet of their business. The primary goal of a good freight carrier is developing a strong customer/carrier relationship. Many of these freight carriers consider themselves “full service,” in that they will handle any and all aspects of their customer’s shipments. That can include scheduling pickups, dealing with delivery issues, claim issues, damage issues, or a host of other situations. This sort of service provides a sense of comfort and convenience for many customers. A good freight carrier is a true shipping professional, and these freight professionals know the ins and outs of a complex shipping world so their customers don’t have to.

In conclusion, carriers and brokers are not interchangeable, though they work closely together in the freight industry. A freight carrier is physically responsible for moving shipments from point A to point B. A freight carrier is a company that owns trucks, employs drivers, and charges for their service of picking up and delivering freight. On the other hand, a freight broker is a third party company. A good freight carrier also offers an array of customer services, and is always working to develop meaningful and helpful customer relationships with the ultimate goal of handling all aspects of their customer’s shipments.

Now that we’ve got that our basic definitions out of the way, we can move forward to the actual mechanics of your typical LTL shipment. In other words, what exactly happens with your freight after it’s picked up.

Chapter 2: LTL Shipping Basics

In this chapter, we'll talk about the basics of a standard LTL shipment, and go step-by-step through the process of LTL transit, including terminal breakdowns.

We've discussed the foundations of the LTL freight industry, so let's move on to some specifics about what happens to your freight once it's picked up. In this chapter, we'll track your LTL shipment from pickup to delivery. Please note that the following will apply only to LTL shipping. Truckload shipping has its own set of rules that we'll discuss later.

One of the most important parts of LTL shipping is the network of carrier terminals. These terminals can range in size, but they all act as departure and arrival points for LTL freight. Unlike truckload shipping, LTL freight is not picked up and delivered on the same truck. Instead, LTL freight is



transferred from truck to truck at different terminals until the freight arrives at the destination terminal. From there, it will be loaded onto a final truck and delivered to the consignee.

To get a better understanding of what I'm talking about, let's "trace," or track, a typical LTL shipment:

A pickup is scheduled through carrier dispatch or customer service. This pickup is usually done by phone, but some carriers use emails as well. This request will let the carrier know where to pick up, what to pick up (commodity), how much they'll be picking up (pallet/piece count & weight) and what time the freight will be available for pickup (Carriers typically require a two hour-window and at least a two-hour cushion when scheduling pickups). The pickup location is known as the **SHIPPER**.

For this example, let's say the shipper is in Edmonton, Alberta and the delivery will be in Grande Prairie, Alberta. When the freight is picked up and loaded into the back of the truck, the driver will sticker the freight with a **PRO NUMBER** - a shipment's identification and tracking number. The driver will then make his way to his next pickup. Pickup routes are determined by carrier dispatchers and take into account the quantity and weight of shipments, as well as geographical locations. It's common practice for deliveries to be completed in the mornings, while pickups are usually taken care of in the afternoon. After the driver has completed all his scheduled pickups or his truck is full, he then heads back to the **ORIGIN TERMINAL**. The carrier's second shift dock crew will remove the freight from the truck, scan the PRO Numbers into the carrier system for tracking purposes, and from there will begin to load the freight back on to trucks heading out of the terminal the next morning. In our example we had freight picked up in Edmonton heading to Grande Prairie. Therefore, the freight will be loaded on to a truck headed West. The night crew also takes all the freight coming from elsewhere that needs to be delivered in Edmonton and loads it on to a truck for delivery the next morning. Morning comes and the carrier trucks, full with freight to deliver, head out on their routes. They'll off-load all freight in the mornings until their trucks are empty, and from there they will begin the process again with more pickups. The shipment heading out of Edmonton will be on a truck heading westbound, for a stop at the next terminal along the way. The freight will be unloaded, the PRO will be scanned into the carrier system for tracking purposes, and the freight will be reloaded on to the correct truck, and then will ship out for the next terminal. From that terminal, the freight will move west to Grande Prairie, following the same steps listed above at each terminal location. Once it finally reaches its destination terminal, the freight will go out on a truck in the morning and be delivered to its final destination, known as the **CONSIGNEE**.

Shipper → Origin Terminal → Transit → Destination Terminal → Consignee

This is the life of a typical LTL shipment. As you can see, it's a lot of moving parts with lots of hands-on the freight. It's important to keep this in mind as you package your freight for transit (we'll talk more about this later), as the freight will be moved off and on trucks by forklifts as it makes its way to its final destination.

Now that we've covered the basics of LTL shipping, let's move on to LTL freight quotes.

Chapter 3: LTL Freight Quotes

Here we'll discuss what information is needed for a standard LTL quote. We'll also talk about when volume quotes are needed, and how they differ from a regular quote.

We've discussed what it means to ship LTL freight, so let's move on to pricing. **Once again, the below section applies only to LTL shipping.** We'll talk about full truckload pricing later.

There are two types of LTL quotes that are available, and how much freight you plan to ship will determine which one you need. Remember this disclaimer though: **A "shipment" is the packaged freight going from Point A to Point B. So if you have freight heading to two separate consignee locations, even if the shipper location is the same, they will be considered two separate LTL shipments.** With that covered, let's start with your standard LTL quote.

There are four pieces of information that you must-have for a standard LTL quote:

Total Weight

Origin Address

Consignee Address

Dimensions



The first 3 are pretty self-explanatory. The origin address is the address where the freight will be picked up. Note that this is not the origin terminal city or even the manufacturer city. This is the actual city where the freight will be loaded on to the truck. The Consignee Address is the opposite of the origin address, in that it's the city where the freight will be delivered. Once again, this is the actual delivery address location, Part of the pricing for LTL shipments come from the distance the freight will travel.

The third part of a standard LTL quote is the total weight of the shipment. This weight includes any packaging or palletizing that is needed to make the freight ready to ship. Make sure that your weights are exact, as carriers will use industrial shipping scales to make sure the weight claimed on the **BOL** matches the actual weight of the shipment. If it doesn't, you'll be charged for the difference. This is called a **REWEIGH**, and we'll discuss reweighs and other freight accessorials in later chapters.

The final piece of information needed for your standard LTL shipping quote is the **DIMENSIONS OR CUBED WEIGHT**. To calculate dimensional (DIM) weight, multiply the length, width, and height of a package, using the longest point on each side. Then, divide the cubic size of the package in inches by the DIM divisor to calculate the dimensional weight in pounds. In our case, the divisor is 172.8.

Chapter 4: LTL Chargeable Weight

In this chapter, we'll talk about LTL chargeable weight and how it is determined.

Chargeable weight is the weight that a Carrier will bill you for. There are two aspects to consider here:

1) Actual Weight - this is the weight stated on the Bill of Lading by the shipper. Carriers may reweigh the freight if the weight seems inaccurate but not all freight gets reweighed all the time. If freight is re-weighed, this becomes the new (and accurate) actual weight of the shipment.

2) Cubed Weight - this is the dimensional weight or theoretical weight of an item and is based on 10lbs per cubic feet of space in a van. Basically, this means that carriers calculate the space an item will occupy in the trailer. Cubed weight can be calculated using the following formula: Cubed Weight = Length x Width x Height (in inches) / 172.8 Eg - 48x48x48" / 172.8 = 640 lbs cubed weight.

Chargeable weight is the greater of the two and is used to ensure LTL Carriers are getting the maximum capacity out of the truck. For example, insulation or other light material is bulky and cannot be charged at the actual weight only, therefore Carriers will bill based on the cubed weight (which is the chargeable weight).

Chapter 5: LTL Accessorials

In this chapter, we'll talk about LTL accessorials, including descriptions of some of the more common additional services applied to LTL shipments.

From a pricing perspective, a standard LTL shipment is considered dock-to-dock, business-to-business. This means when the driver arrives for pickup, he expects to be able to back his truck up to a loading dock. From there, the shipper will load the freight on to the back of the truck using a forklift or pallet jack. The freight will then be in transit until it arrives for delivery to another business dock.

Of course, not everyone has a shipping dock or a forklift, and sometimes you need things delivered to a residence or someplace other than a business. This is where LTL freight accessorials come in. **LTL ACCESSORIALS** are additional services that have an additional cost (most of the time) because they are considered outside of the carriers "standard" procedures. There are many types of these additional services that you can buy, and different carriers offer different services for different prices. To get an exact quote for some of these services, you'll need to contact the carrier directly. But for our purposes, I'm going to list some of the major services freight carriers provide on a daily basis and define them. We'll start with the most common.

Power Tailgate Pickup / Delivery: A liftgate is a gate attached to the back of carrier trucks that assists in lifting pallets or freight from the ground. It is used when there is no forklift or dock to assist in loading the freight. Only certain trucks have this option available, and usually, the cost ranges from \$25 to \$50 for the service. It can be used at both pickup and delivery if necessary and is often used for residential deliveries (as homes rarely have docks). Because different trucks are being used to deliver and pick up the freight, the charge can be applied to both pickup and destination if a Power tailgate is used at both ends.

[Download The Freight Guide to Liftgates.](#)

Residential Pickup / Residential Delivery: As we mentioned before, most standard LTL pickup and deliveries are considered business-to-business shipments. There is an additional charge when the pickup or delivery is at a residential location. Oftentimes the carrier must take smaller trucks into the residential areas due to street size. The carrier will also call to set up a delivery appointment before taking the freight out for delivery, to ensure that the consignee is home. Sometimes, a residential pick up or delivery will need a liftgate to assist the driver in getting the freight from the ground to the truck. The charge for this pickup or delivery service varies from carrier to carrier (as all accessorial charges do), but anywhere from \$50 to \$150 can be a normal rate.

[Download The Guide to Residential LTL Shipping.](#)

Appointment Delivery: On standard LTL shipments, deliveries are handled on a first-come, first-serve basis. This means that once an item arrives at the destination terminal, it will automatically be loaded on to a truck for delivery. Delivery to the consignee will occur sometime that next day, depending on the driver's route. But what if a shipment needs an appointment for delivery? Or even just a "heads up" to confirm plans to receive freight? This service is pretty self-explanatory as you're paying for the carrier to call (notify) the receiver (consignee) to let them know their freight is ready to be delivered at the consignee's convenience. It's important for the consignee phone number and contact to be visible on the BOL used at the time of pickup, otherwise, the carrier will not know who to call to set up the delivery appointment. Fees of \$25 - \$45 typically apply for this service.

Hazardous Materials: When freight is considered hazardous, for obvious reasons, special handling needs to be employed. Shippers and Carriers must follow certain guidelines depending on the type of hazardous material they are shipping. MSDS may need to accompany the freight and placards may be required. Fees of 10% are average for this extra handling. Heated Service: Some freight cannot freeze (eg chemicals, etc) so carriers put small propane heaters in the van surrounding the freight to protect it from freezing. Typically a 10% charge will apply to cover this extra service.

Limited Access Delivery / Pickup: Similar to a residential charge, limited access applies to any location that is outside of a normal shipping business. This charge includes

locations such as Government buildings, schools, universities, prisons, farms, ranches, airports, and shipping ports (among others). This service will also need to be included for any location that is literally “limited” in its accessibility. This includes unusually small parking lots, guard gates, fenced locations, etc. Any place that it would be difficult to maneuver a 53ft. or 48ft. semi-truck will need to be considered for Limited Access. This charge can be very subjective, so it’s best to ask the carrier or your broker if the location will be limited access if you think there might be a chance.

Inside Pickup / Inside Delivery: The name of these services can be a bit misleading to the shipping beginner, so we’ll provide a bit of context and clarification. We’ve already discussed that a standard LTL shipment is dock-to-dock, business-to-business. But what if you don’t have a dock? Well, generally those without a dock will need a liftgate to get the freight off the truck. Once it’s on the ground the carrier has completed their standard delivery, and they’re free to leave and continue to their next drop or pickup. This means if you don’t have a forklift or some other way to move your shipment, you’ll have to break down the pallet or crate and move the pieces into your warehouse or shop manually. With Inside Delivery / Inside Pickup, the driver will take the freight into your garage, store, shop, etc. As opposed to sitting out on the curb, your freight will be more accessible and easier to unpack/unload. Inside-delivery/pickup is often paired with residential deliveries and pickups as well, though there is a caveat that needs to be noted. Because of liability issues, a freight carrier cannot actually enter your house. LTL shipping is not a moving company, so they will not be taking your freight into your living room or kitchen. This would require the use of a “white glove service,” and is outside of the LTL shipping industry. What they can do with this service is take the freight up your driveway to your garage or porch. This ensures that your freight is not sitting on the curb with no way to move it. The minimum charge for this service is typically \$25

Overlength / Overdimensional: This service is needed when a single piece is over the standard LTL limitations of space (10 linear feet). Different carriers vary on what they consider over-dimensional so check with your carrier if you have an overlength piece. It is best to acquire a quote for any pieces over 10ft long. **Airport / Auction / Construction Site Pickup / Delivery:** If you have freight picking up or delivering to an airport, auction or construction site, an additional charge will be applied. This charge varies depending on carrier, so check with your broker or carrier before shipping.

Construction Site Pickup / Delivery: If you have freight picking up or delivering to a construction site, an additional charge will be applied. This charge varies depending on carrier, so check with your broker or carrier before shipping.

Flat Deck Service: Flat deck service is available for freight that is too heavy or large to fit in an enclosed van. Bundles of pipe, machinery, and equipment are just a few examples of freight that would require deck service. Additional charges apply due to the extra time and manpower taken to load and tie-down deck freight. If the item needs to be protected from the elements, a tarp will be tied down around the freight. Additional charges apply for tarping as well. Different carriers rate deck freight differently, so a quote should be obtained.

Chapter 6: LTL Packaging

Here we'll discuss the basics of packaging for your LTL shipment.

The packaging is an integral part of the freight industry, and in this chapter, we'll go over some of the different packaging standards observed by carriers in the LTL shipping industry, as well as some hints and tips to keep your freight safe during transit.

The most common type of freight is a palletized shipment. Pallets come in all sizes, but a standard pallet is usually about four feet by four feet (Length x Width) or 48" x 48". A pallet makes it easy to secure your freight and works best for LTL shipping because it's simple to move a pallet with a forklift or a pallet jack. As we've mentioned before, LTL freight moves from terminal to terminal, truck to truck. And how do they move the freight during this process? They use a forklift.

A forklift works great with pallets, so if you're looking for the best possible packaging for your LTL freight, a pallet is the way to go. It's important, no matter its value, that the freight is properly secured to the pallet. This can be done using industrial saran wrap to make sure the freight will not fall off the pallet during transit. Its also



important to securely package the individual pieces together, as you don't want them separating during transit. Separated freight results in freight being lost and shipments delivering short.

Though pallets are the preferred packaging for LTL freight shipping, they are not the only way freight is secured. Another common way to package freight is known as "crating." Crating provides an extra level of protection for your freight, as it is fully enclosed. It's preferred to palletize the crate to make it easier for the carriers to move the freight from dock to dock, but it's not absolutely necessary.

Occasionally, carriers will permit shippers to move separate boxes (sometimes as many as five) as part of a single shipment, but we do not suggest it. Boxes may become separated during the transit process, resulting in lost freight. With so many moving parts, it's easier and simpler to make sure your boxes are consolidated to avoid losses.

Chapter 7: LTL Claims and Insurance

In this chapter, we'll talk about claims and insurance as they relate to lost or damaged freight.

It's in the best interest of everyone in the shipping industry (customer, carrier, broker) that freight is picked up and delivered as quickly and safely as possible. As we've discussed throughout this book, carriers and brokers work very hard to ensure this process for their customer. However, sometimes mistakes do happen. In this chapter, we'll discuss what happens if your freight is damaged or lost, and how to best avoid such issues.

Let's begin with the concept of freight insurance. As you ship your LTL freight, you'll need to protect it from the possibility of damage as best you can, however, if an item does get damaged in transit, you'll want to get paid for that damage. There are two types of insurance you can get for your freight: carrier insurance or third party insurance.

Carrier insurance is the insurance covered internally by the carriers for the freight that they transport. Coverage is based on commodity, value, freight class, size, weight, and distance traveled. Before we get any further with carrier insurance, let's say outright that carrier insurance coverage has its fair share of limitations. Each carrier's coverage differs, but overall, they rarely pay out even half of what the claims will sometimes amount to.



Now, before we go bashing on freight carriers and their insurance limitations, let's consider a few things. First, insurance is a notoriously fickle and subjective business across the board. Whether it be car insurance, home insurance, or life insurance – payouts can be tough. Secondly, the freight industry is a slick one with lots of moving parts. When you're dealing with freight transportation and shipping, the damage is part of the game regardless of carrier. It's not sustainable for a carrier to pay out every damage claim in full for every shipment that they move.

Luckily at Willy's Trucking Service we payout up to \$5,000 dollars in damages because we are that confident in our service.

Like any insurance, the claims process can be tricky, but there are a few things to keep in mind as you file a claim for damaged or lost freight:

ALWAYS NOTATE DAMAGE – It's very important to always notate damage on the delivery receipt if there's even a hint of damage to your shipment. This **POD (Proof Of Delivery)** will be key when you file a claim through the carrier for damage. Without any damage notated on the POD, the chance of a claim being paid out shrinks from about 80% to less than 10%. The POD will be the most important aspect of the claims process, and just like other aspects of the freight industry, the more notes and the more information available, the smoother the process.

TAKE PICTURES ASAP – Even if you notate on the POD that the freight is damaged, take pictures immediately to document the damage. These pictures will be used later in the claims process to prove the carrier damaged the shipment.

HAVE DOCUMENTATION READY – For a claim to be paid out (lost or damaged), you'll need some form of commercial invoice to prove the value of the freight you're claiming. Along with the signed POD, pictures, and claim forms, these documents will be the reason your claim does or does not get paid out.

BE PATIENT – Like any sort of insurance situation, claims can take a while to get paid out. A good rule of thumb is to allow 60-90 days once the claim has been filed before expecting any sort of payment. It's also important to remember that the carrier will be the one paying out the claim (directly or through a third party), not a freight broker.

Chapter 8: LTL Billing and Auditing

In this chapter, we'll discuss the billing practices of both carriers and brokers

First off, the freight billing structure will be different if you're going directly to the carrier than if you're working through a freight broker. If you're going carrier direct, this means you have an account with the carrier, and they'll send you the invoices for your freight shipping. You'll pay them directly, and any sort of invoice discrepancies will have to be settled individually between customer and carrier. Usually, it takes the carrier between a couple of days to a week to send out their invoices after the freight has delivered. Each carrier will have a different set of standards when it comes to billing - there is no industry standard - so if you do go carrier correct you'll have to coordinate the details with the carrier billing department.

If you're using a freight broker, you won't be seeing any invoices directly from the carrier. Instead, you'll receive your bills from the freight broker. With the carrier invoicing the broker direct, a quality freight broker will first audit the charges. What do I mean, "audit," the charges? When a freight broker audits charges they go through each and every invoice and additional charge, and confirm the legitimacy of the charge before passing the charges on to the customer.

So what are these "additional charges" we keep referring to? Well, the most common invoice charges we see are the **REWEIGH**. In order to process this additional charge, the carrier will have to produce **W&I (Weight and Inspection) CERTIFICATES** that provide proof for the additional charges. If your freight has been reweighed, the carrier will need to provide official documentation of the reweigh including the name of the person who weighed the item, the old and new weights, and the location and identification of the official scale used.

Chapter 9: Truckload Equipment Types

Here we'll discuss the different types of trucks or "equipment" available to ship full truckload shipments.

In this chapter, we'll switch gears and move to the other side of the freight shipping industry: **TRUCKLOAD SHIPPING**. Though there is an overlap of industry standards between Truckload and LTL, it's best to view them as separate entities with their own rules, practices, and principles. Let's start with the common truckload equipment used

The term "equipment" means "what kind of truck" in the shipping industry. Similar to the air travel industry, these different pieces of equipment are used for different types of freight shipments. Apart from their uses, their costs are also different. Let's start with the most common piece of equipment, the **DRY VAN**.

A dry van is your normal, 53 ft. or 48 ft. semi-truck. It is enclosed, not heated or cooled, and has swing doors in the back for loading and unloading freight. If you've ever driven on a major highway, you're familiar with this sort of equipment. A dry van can transport any freight that fits inside the trailer (standard dimensions are 102 in. wide and 110 in. high), or 26-28 standard-sized pallets. The typical maximum weight these trailers can scale is 45,000 lbs., but this will vary from carrier to carrier depending on preferences and trailer type.

If you're looking to move bigger equipment that won't fit inside a dry van, you're looking for a **FLATBED TRAILER**. This equipment is primarily used for large equipment that needs to be side-loaded. The trailers most commonly used are 53 ft. in length, with a maximum weight limit of 48,000 lbs. Keep in mind that flatbeds and dry vans do not offer the services of a liftgate. Another important aspect to consider when it comes to shipping on flatbed trailers is the security of the freight once it's on the trailer. Apart from being subject to the elements, you'll need to make sure your freight is properly secured to the deck. Carriers often offer straps and tarps to ensure that your freight is as secure and safe as possible.

The third type of equipment available for a full truckload shipment is a **STEP-DECK TRAILER**. This equipment is very similar to a flatbed truck in that it has no roof or sides, however, a portion of the trailer deck is lower. This is in place primarily to increase the legal height the freight can occupy. For a standard flatbed trailer, the maximum height is 8.5 ft. while a step-deck allows a maximum legal height of 10 ft. Keep in mind this drop-deck limits the length of the trailer in a way a flatbed does not. There are also several variations of this type of trailer that can accommodate commodity heights up to 13 ft., but as with most specialized pieces of equipment, availability can be limited.

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Chapter 10: Truckload Quotes

In this chapter we'll talk about getting full truckload quotes, and how they differ from standard LTL quotes.

As mentioned at the beginning of this book, the differences between less than truckload and truckload shipping are many. In this chapter, we'll briefly discuss the basic mechanisms behind full truckload shipping including quotes, processes, and even pricing and insurance.

Let's begin with the basic foundation of truckload shipping and introduce a few terms that we'll visit again during this chapter. Unlike LTL shipments, there is not a system or set of parameters that can be applied to "standardize" truckload shipping. This lack of system lends to a more fluid shipping industry than that of the LTL variety and allows

for more negotiation between broker, carrier, and driver. Instead of abstractly trying to explain the details of a truckload shipment, let's take an example and move through the quoting process. for more negotiation between broker, carrier, and driver.



Instead of abstractly trying to explain the details of a truckload shipment, let's take an example and move through the quoting process.

Joe owns a business in Edmonton, AB that sells computer equipment. It's a good time of year for Joe, as he's made a big sale and has a buyer in Grande Prairie that's purchased 100 large boxes of equipment. Joe has done the math and it comes out to about 20 pallets of material. Usually Joe ships smaller pieces LTL, but with such a large shipment he knows that his freight won't fall under the standard LTL parameters. That leaves Joe with two options; get a volume quote from a standard LTL carrier, or get a full truckload quote. Considering the size of the shipment (a normal dry van usually holds about 26-28 single-stacked pallets).

Joe knows it's going to be more cost-efficient to buy space for the entire truck as opposed to buying spaced based on cubic capacity. So what's Joe's next step?

The first step in acquiring a full truckload quote is assembling information, some of which is information also needed for a typical LTL shipment. For an accurate truckload quote he'll need:

- Origin and destination cities, as well as the estimated date of pickup.
- Total piece count and weight including dimensions of the pieces and if they are stackable.
- Commodity being shipped including the freight value. Unlike LTL, a freight class is not used in full truckload shipping, and pricing is subjective and dependent on value and insurance.
- Equipment being used for shipment. If you're unsure of the equipment needed, speak with your Truckload representative for advice.

Once Joe has all his information compiled, it's time to take it to his freight Carrier or Broker. From there, his Carrier will provide him a quote and a broker will post the load on a series of Internet LOAD BOARDS. Carriers monitor these load boards across the country. A good broker will also reach out to their network of trucking carriers and operators as more options allow for better pricing and service. Price negotiations will commence between the broker/shipper and the carrier, and depending on availability of drivers, freight size, distance, and local freight market, a price will be agreed upon.

When it comes to shipping full truckload freight in order to get the cheapest rates from the carrier, certain information is needed that can only be provided by a freight professional. If Joe, a novice freight shipper, attempts to set up his own full truckload shipment there is the chance an un-trusted carrier will give him a bad deal, forcing him to overpay on his quote and shipment. Also, Willy's freight professionals have the experience and tools to properly vet and secure the best rates for Joe's shipment. If your freight moves with a carrier who does not have these things in place then you, your freight, and fellow motorists are at risk.

Once a trusted carrier is “locked-in” to the shipment, normal shipping protocols kick in, similar to those in the LTL world as discussed in previous chapters. The only difference being that in truckload, the shippers usually produce their own BOL. This BOL will be given to the driver when he arrives to pick up the freight. The freight will be loaded into the truck, given a PRO number, and then will be considered “in transit.”

Unlike LTL shipping, a full truckload shipment will remain on the same trailer for the entirety of its transit. This differs wildly from standard LTL shipments, where terminals are used to move the freight from shipper to consignee. With a truckload shipment, once loaded, the freight will not be unloaded until its final destination. Even if the transit time is more than one day (Which in the case of Joe is true, it takes more than one day to get from Edmonton to Grande Prairie) the freight will remain on the same trailer

When it comes to protecting your full truckload freight, the process is similar to LTL shipping. Carriers will be required to carry a certain amount of insurance (usually around \$100,000) and then if damage does occur the carrier will be responsible for covering any issues. You can also buy third party insurance, just as in LTL, and the third party will pay out the claim and be compensated from the carrier.

Conclusion

We've covered everything from brokers and carriers, to claims and insurance and even billing practices. We've talked about the many differences between Less-Than-Truckload freight and Truckload freight, and when it's best to use both. We've touched on transportation, quotes, freight class, and even reefer trucks, chargeable weight, and Truckloads.

Below you'll find a Glossary of the many terms we have referenced in this book, along with some frequently asked questions that we've compiled over the years.

We hope this book has introduced you to freight shipping in a way that is fun and easy to understand, and that you'll be able to look back as needed on the information and instructions it provides.

Want to know a little about who wrote this book? [Willy's Trucking Service](#) is a full-service freight service based out of Edmonton, AB. Founded in 2007, we work with both LTL and Truckload shippers to get our customers the best rates and service in the business.

Check us out on social media, and happy shipping!



Glossary

Accessorial – An additional service that can be requested for an LTL shipment. Common accessorials include liftgates and residential deliveries/pickups. Additional cost varies depending on service and carrier.

Bill of Lading (BOL) – Document used to show all relevant details for a freight shipment. BOLs include pickup and delivery information, weight, class, contacts, billing, and carrier information. The BOL is given to the carrier at time of pickup and accompanies freight through transit.

Carrier – A company that owns its own equipment and transports freight across the country using drivers, dispatchers, and terminals.

Consignee – The receiver of a freight shipment. The opposite of a shipper.

Customer Service Representative (CSR) – Carrier department that handles tracking and tracing, pickups and deliveries. They work in close proximity to dispatchers, drivers, and claims departments.

Dispatcher – Carrier department that coordinates driver routes including pickups and deliveries. They work closely with carrier customer service representatives and communicate directly with drivers throughout the day.

Dock Workers – Carrier department in charge of loading and unloading freight from carrier terminals. They can also scan PRO numbers into the carrier system.

Driver – Carrier department of drivers who operate the trucks used to pick up and deliver freight. They work closely with dispatchers to coordinate pickup and delivery routes on a daily basis.

Dry Van – Standard equipment for Truckload and LTL shipments. A 53 or 48 ft. trailer that is neither heated nor cooled, used to transport freight.

Flatbed – Equipment used in truckload shipping that has no top or side panels, thereby providing no protection to freight. Generally used on large freight items that cannot fit in a standard dry van.

Freight Broker – A third party company that supplies shipping rates and service to customers, and acts a bridge between carrier and customer. A full-service broker provides complete shipping service (often using TMS) to their customers on top of lower shipping rates.

Freight Shipping – The transportation of goods from one location to another, usually by a commercial carrier.

Less Than Truckload (LTL) – A type of freight shipping focused on moving shipments that take up less than a full truckload. LTL has its own structure for pricing, and quoting (including volume quotes). In addition, LTL has its own carrier and broker structure, separate from Truckload shipping.

Liftgate – A lift attached to the back of some carrier trucks that assist with loading and unloading freight when a dock or forklift is not available. Often used for residential deliveries and pickups.

Load Board - An online message board used by truckload brokers and carriers to assign jobs, pickups, and deliveries.

Notify Consignee – Accessorial available for purchase on shipments that need an appointment for delivery.

OS&D Department - Carrier department in charge of overages, shortages, and damage.

PRO Number – Identification number assigned to freight after it has been picked up by carrier that allows for tracking/ tracing.

Proof of Delivery (POD) – Document signed at the time of delivery by the consignee, notating freight received in good form as well as the time of delivery and name of the receiver. Also known as a Delivery Receipt (DR).

Reweigh – Invoice discrepancy when a carrier invoices a shipment at a higher or lower weight than noted on the BOL.

Shipper – The origin location of a freight shipment. Opposite of consignee. They are responsible for handing over the freight along with the BOL to the carrier.

Step Deck – Equipment used in Truckload shipping, similar to a flatbed trailer but with a lowered deck portion that allows for greater freight height possibility.

Terminal – Carrier hub where LTL shipments are moved during transit. Carrier terminals are situated across the country and come in varying sizes.

Truckload (TL) – A type of freight shipping specializing in moving freight that requires a full truckload of space. This aspect of freight is wholly different from LTL and has its own carrier and broker structure.

Volume Quote – A type of LTL freight quote needed when the shipment is outside the parameters of a standard LTL shipment in regards to weight or size. The quote must be visible on the BOL used by the shipper to be applicable to the shipment.

W&I Certificate – Weight and Inspection certificate created by the carrier when a shipment is reweighed or reclassified.

FAQs

Will I always need a bill of lading (BOL) when shipping?

Yes. Both LTL and TL shipping requires the use of a BOL given to the driver by the shipper.

Is there insurance coverage for all my shipments?

All LTL carriers and most Truckload carriers provide insurance, however, the amount of coverage varies between carrier and commodity. Most freight brokers also offer third party insurance.

What's the difference between a freight carrier and a freight broker?

A freight carrier is a company that owns trucks and employs drivers to transport freight. A freight broker is a third party that acts as a liaison between carrier and customer.

Must I have a freight broker to transport freight?

A freight broker is not required to ship LTL or TL freight.

What is a "standard" LTL shipment?

A standard LTL shipment is one that takes up less than twelve linear feet in the back of a carrier truck (Six standard non-stack pallets). The shipment also weighs less than 7,000lbs.

What is a "standard" pallet size?

The standard pallet size is 48 inches length x 48 inches width. Another size considered by most to be standard is 40 inches length by 48 inches width. The pallet height will vary per shipment.

What is a TMS?

A TMS is a Transportation Management System used by freight brokers and carriers to coordinate pickup, delivery, and tracking of an LTL shipment.

What is a POD?

Also known as a Proof of Delivery or Delivery Receipt, this is a document signed by the consignee at the time of delivery notating the status of the shipment as delivered. Any damage or loss should be notated on the POD in order to have insurance claims paid out.