

GLOSSARY

PORT AND SHIPPING TERMS

Backhaul

To haul a shipment back over part of a route that it has already traveled; return movement of cargo, usually opposite from the direction of its primary cargo destination.

Ballast keel

A heavy keel fitted to sailing vessels to lower the center of gravity and improve stability.

Ballast tanks

Compartments at the bottom of a ship that are filled with liquids for stability and to make the ship seaworthy.

Beam

The width of a ship.

Belt line

A switching railroad operating within a port or other commercial area.

Berth

A place in which a vessel is moored or secured; place alongside a quay where a ship loads or discharges cargo.

Berth term

Shipped under a rate that does not include the cost of loading or unloading.



Berthage

Charges for the use of a berth.

Bill of lading

A document that establishes the terms of contract between a shipper and a transportation company. It serves as a document of title, a contract of carriage, and a receipt for goods.

Bogie

A set of wheels built specifically as rear wheels under a sea container.

Bond port

Port of a vessel's initial customs entry to any country; also known as first port of call.

Bonded warehouse

A warehouse authorized by customs authorities for storage of goods on which payment of duties is deferred until the goods are removed.

Break bulk

Loose, non-containerized cargo stowed directly into a ship's hold; to unload and distribute a portion or all of the contents of a container.

Broker

A person who arranges for transportation of loads for a percentage of the revenue from the load.

Build-operate-transfer (BOT)

A form of concession wherein a private party or consortium agrees to finance, construct, operate, and maintain a facility for a specified period and then transfer the facility to a government or other public authority. The concessionaire bears the commercial risk of operating the facility.

Build-own-operate (BOO)

A form of project wherein a private party or consortium agrees to finance, construct, operate, and maintain a facility previously owned and/or operated by a public authority. The concessionaire retains ownership of the facility. The concessionaire bears the commercial risk of operating the facility.

Bulkhead

A structure to resist water; a partition separating one part of a ship from another part.

Bulk vessel

All vessels designed to carry bulk cargo such as grain, fertilizers, ore, and oil.

Bunkers

Fuel used aboard ships.

Cabotage

Shipments between ports of a single nation, frequently reserved to national flag vessels of that nation.

Carfloat

A barge equipped with tracks on which railroad cars are moved by water.

Cargo tonnage

Ocean freight is frequently billed on the basis of weight or measurement tons. Weight tons can be expressed in terms of short tons of 2000 pounds, long tons of 2240 pounds, or metric tons of 1000 kilograms (2204.62 pounds). Measurement tons are usually expressed as cargo measurement of 40 cubic feet (1.12 cubic meters) or cubic meters (35.3 cubic feet).



Carrier

Any person or entity who, in a contract of carriage, undertakes to perform or to procure the performance of carriage by sea, inland waterway, rail, road, air, or by a combination of such modes.

Cartage

Intra-port or local hauling of cargo by drays or trucks; also referred to as drayage.

Chassis

A frame with wheels and container locking devices to secure the container for movement.

Classification yard

A railroad yard with many tracks used for assembling freight trains.

Cleaning in transit

The stopping of articles (such as farm products) for cleaning at a point between the point of origin and destination.

Clearance

The size beyond which vessels, cars, or loads cannot pass through, under, or over bridges, tunnels, highways, etc.

Cleat

A device secured on the floor of a container to provide additional support or strength to a cargo-restraining device, or a device attached to a wharf to secure mooring lines.

Common carrier

A transportation company that provides service to the general public at published rates.

Concession

An arrangement whereby a private party (concessionaire) leases assets from a public authority for an extended period and has responsibility for financing specified new fixed investments during the period and for providing specified services associated with the assets; in return, the concessionaire receives specified revenues from the operation of the assets; the assets revert to the public sector at expiration of the contract.

Conservancy

In some countries, this fee is levied to retain upkeep of the approaches to waterways and canals.

Consolidation

Cargo containing shipments of two or more shippers of suppliers. Containerload shipments may be consolidated for one or more consignees.

Container

A truck trailer body that can be detached from the chassis for loading onto a vessel, a rail car, or stacked in a container depot. Containers may be ventilated, insulated, refrigerated, flat rack, vehicle rack, open top, bulk liquid, dry bulk, or other special configurations. Typical containers may be 20 feet, 40 feet, 45 feet, 48 feet, or 53 feet in length, 8 feet or 8.5 feet in width, and 8.5 feet or 9.5 feet in height.

Container freight station (CFS)

A shipping dock where cargo is loaded ("stuffed") into or unloaded ("stripped") from containers. Container reloading to/from sea containers to rail and motor carrier equipment is an activity typically performed in a container freight station.



Container pool

An agreement between parties that allows the efficient use and supply of containers; a common supply of containers available to the shipper as required.

Containership

Ship equipped with cells into which containers can be stacked; containerships may be full or partial, depending on whether all or only some of its compartments are fitted with container cells.

Container terminal

An area designated for the stowage of cargo in containers, usually accessible by truck, railroad, and marine transportation, where containers are picked up, dropped off, maintained, and housed.

Container yard

A materials handling/storage facility used for completely unitized loads in containers and/or empty containers.

Contraband

Cargo that is prohibited.

Contract carrier

Any person not a common carrier who, under special and individual contracts or agreements, transports passengers or cargo for compensation.

Controlled atmosphere

Sophisticated, computer controlled systems that manage the mixture of gases within a container throughout an intermodal journey, thereby reducing decay.

Customhouse

A government office where duties are paid, documents filed, etc., on foreign shipments.

Customs broker

A person or firm, licensed by the customs authority of their country when required, engaged in entering and clearing goods through customs for a client (importer).

Cut-off time (Closing Time)

The latest time a container may be delivered to a terminal for loading to a scheduled vessel, train, or truck.

Daily running cost

Cost per day of operating a ship.

Deconsolidation point

Place where loose or other non-containerized cargo is ungrouped for delivery.

Demurrage

The delay of a vessel or detention of a shipment beyond the stipulated time allowed for loading or unloading; the resulting payment to the owner for such delay or detention.

Dock

For ships, a cargo handling area parallel to the shoreline.

Draft

The depth of a loaded vessel in the water, taken from the level of the waterline, to the lowest point of the hull of the vessel; depth of water, or distance between the bottom of the ship and the water line. Also referred to as draught.



Dredging

Removal of sediment to deepen access channels, provide turning basins for ships, and adequate water depth along waterside facilities.

Dry Bulk

Low density cargo, such as agri-food products, fertilizers and ores, that are transported in bulk carriers.

Dunnage

Material used in stowing cargo either for separation or the prevention of damage

Electronic data interchange (EDI)

Transmission of transactional data between computer systems.

EDIFACT

Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Trade. International data interchange standards sponsored by the United Nations.

Eminent domain

The sovereign power to take property for a necessary public use, with reasonable compensation.

Feeder service

Transport service whereby loaded or empty containers in a regional area are transferred to a "mother ship" for a long-haul ocean voyage.

Fixed costs

Costs that do not vary with the level of activity. Some fixed costs continue even if no cargo is carried; for example, terminal leases, rent, and property taxes.

Force majeure

The title of a common clause in contracts, exempting the parties for non-fulfillment of their obligations as a result of conditions beyond their control, such as earthquakes, floods, or war.

Foreign trade zone

A free port in a country divorced from customs authority but under government control. Merchandise, except contraband, may be stored in the zone without being subject to import duty regulations.

Forty-foot equivalent units (FEUs)

Unit of measurement equivalent to one forty-foot container. Two twenty-foot containers (TEUs) equal one FEU. Container vessel capacity and port throughput capacity are frequently referred to in FEUs or TEUs.

Free trade zone


A zone, often within a port (but not always so located), designated by the government of a country for duty-free entry of any non-prohibited goods. Merchandise may be stored, displayed, used for manufacturing, etc., with the zone and re-exported without duties being applied. Also referred to as free port.

Freight, demurrage and defense

Class of insurance provided by a protection and indemnity club that covers legal costs incurred by a ship owner in connection with claims arising from the operation of his ship.

Freight forwarder

Person or company who arranges for the carriage of goods and associated formalities on behalf of a shipper. The duties of a forwarder include booking space on a ship, providing all



the necessary documentation and arranging Customs clearance.

Freight payable at destination

Method of paying the freight often used for shipment of bulk cargo whose weight is established on discharge from the ship.

Gantry Crane

A crane or hoisting machine moored on a frame or structure spanning an intervening space, and designed to hoist containers into or out of a ship.

Gateway

A point at which freight moving from one territory to another is interchanged between transportation lines.

Grounding

Deliberate contact by a ship with the bottom while the ship is moored or anchored as a result of the water level dropping or when approaching the coast as a result of a navigational error.

Groupage

The grouping together of several compatible consignments into a full container load. Also referred to as consolidation.

Harbor dues

Port charges to a vessel for each harbor entry, usually on a per gross registered ton basis for commercial vessels.

Harbor master

An officer who attends to berthing ships in a harbor.

Heavy lift charge

A charge made for lifting articles too heavy to be lifted by a ship's tackle.

Hold

A ship's interior storage compartment.

In bond

Cargo moving under customs control where duty has not yet been paid.

Inducement

Placing a port on a vessel's itinerary because the volume of cargo offered by that port justifies the cost of routing the vessel.

Inland carrier

A transportation company that hauls export or import traffic between ports and inland points.

Intermodal

Movement of cargo containers interchangeably between transport modes where the equipment is compatible within the multiple systems.

Jetty

Structure projecting out to sea, designed to protect a port from the force of the waves but also used to berth ships.

Jumboising

Conversion of a ship to increase cargo-carrying capacity by dividing and adding a new section.

Keel

A flat steel plate running along the center line of a vessel.



Keelage

Dues paid by a ship making use of certain British ports.

Knot

Measure of speed of a ship, equal to one nautical mile (1,852 meters) per hour.

LASH

Abbreviation for "Lighter Aboard Ship." A specially constructed vessel equipped with an overhead crane for lifting specially designed barges and stowing them into cellular slots on the vessel.

Laden draught

Depth of water to which a ship is immersed when fully loaded.

Landlord Port

An institutional structure whereby the port authority or other relevant public agency retains ownership of the land, as well as responsibility for maintaining approach channels and navigation aids; under this model, the port does not engage in any operational activities.

Lease-develop-operate (LDO)

A form of concession wherein, under a long-term lease, a private company upgrades and expands an existing facility and manages its cash flows. The public authority holds title to the facility throughout the concession period and receives lease payments on the assets.

Lighter

An open or covered barge towed by a tugboat and used primarily to harbors and inland waterways to carry cargo to/from alongside a vessel.

Limited recourse financing

Project financing in which sponsors or governments agree to provide contingent financial support to give lenders extra comfort; typically provided during the construction and start-up period of a project, which is generally the riskiest time in the life of an infrastructure project.

Line haul

The movement of freight over the tracks of a transportation line from one city to another.

Liner

A vessel sailing between specified ports on a regular basis.

Lloyds' Registry

An organization maintained for the surveying and classing of ships so that insurance underwriters and others may know the quality and condition of the vessels involved.

Longshoreman

Individual employed locally in a port to load and unload ships.


Lo-Lo (Lift on/Lift off)

A type of vessel that allows cargo to be loaded or unloaded by either ship or shore cranes.

Malacca-max: Maximum size ships (containerships and bulkers) which can cross the Malacca Straits. The Malacca-max reference is believed to be today the absolute maximum possible size for container vessels.

Management contract

An arrangement whereby the operation and management of a facility is contracted by the



public authority to a specialized operator for a specified period and under specified conditions relating to performance criteria, economic incentives, maintenance and infrastructure commitments, etc. The public authority retains ownership of the facility and the commercial risk associated with its operation.

Mezzanine financing

A mix of financing instruments, including equity, subordinated debt, completion guarantees, and bridge financing, the balance of which changes as the risk profile of a project changes; i.e., as a project moves beyond construction into operation.

Mixed cargo

Two or more products carried on board one ship.

Mobile crane

General purpose crane capable of being moved from one part of a port to another.

Moor

To attach a ship to the shore by ropes.

Neo-bulk cargo

Uniformly packaged goods, such as wood pulp bales, which store as solidly as bulk, but that are handled as general cargo.

Non-recourse financing

Project financing for which no loan guarantees or financial support is provided by the sponsors or governments to lenders for the project.

Non-vessel operating common carrier (NVOCC)

A cargo consolidator in ocean trades who buys

space from a carrier and re-sells it to smaller shippers. The NVOCC issues bills of lading, publishes tariffs, and otherwise conducts itself as an ocean common carrier, except that it does not provide the actual ocean or intermodal service.

On-carrier

Person or company who contracts to transport cargo from the port or place of discharge of a sea-going or ocean-going ship to another destination by a different means of transport, such as truck, train or barge.

Optional cargo

Cargo that is destined for one of the ship's discharge ports, the exact one not being known when the goods are loaded.

Overcarriage

The carriage of cargo beyond the port for which it was intended.

Pallet

A flat tray, generally made of wood but occasionally steel or other materials, on which goods can be stacked. There are two principal sizes: the ISO pallet, which measures 1 x 1.2 meters and the europallet at 0.8 x 1.2 meters.

Panamax

Maximum-size bulk carriers whose dimensions enable the ship to transit the Panama Canal when lock width is the limiting factor.

Permanent dunnage

Strips of timber fixed to the frames of a ship to keep cargo away from the sides of the ship in order to avoid damage and condensation.



Pier

The structure perpendicular to the shoreline to which a vessel is secured for the purpose of loading and unloading cargo.

Piggy packer

A mobile container-handling crane used to load/unload containers to/from railcars.

Pilferage

Petty theft.

Pilotage

The act of assisting the master of a ship in navigation when entering or leaving a port or in confined water.

Pilotage dues

Fee payable by the owner or operator of a ship for the services of a pilot; the fee is normally based on the ship's registered tonnage.

Platform flat

A shipping container without sides, ends or a roof. Normally 20 x 40 feet long, it is used for awkwardly shaped cargo that cannot fit on or in any other type of container.

Plimsoll mark/load lines

A series of horizontal lines painted on the outside of a ship marking the level that must remain above the surface of the water for the vessel's stability.

Pontoon

Flat-bottomed vessel with a shallow draught.

Pooling

Sharing of cargo or the profit or loss from freight by member lines of a liner conference.

Port dues

Charges levied against a ship owner or ship operator by a port authority for the use of a port.

Port of refuge

Port, not on a ship's itinerary, which she calls at due to some unforeseen hazard at sea and where she may undergo repairs, refuel or rescue cargo.

Port of registry

Place where a ship is registered with the authorities, thereby establishing its nationality.

Portable unloader

Type of ship unloader that is wheeled and capable of being moved around a port wherever needed. It is typically used in ports where there is no dedicated terminal with its own fixed equipment.

Pre-entry

Presentation to the customs authorities of export or import declarations prior to the clearance of goods.

Project financing

Financing wherein the lender looks to a project's cash flows to repay the principal and interest on debt, and to a project's assets for security; also known as "structured financing" because it requires structuring the debt and equity such that a project's cash flows are adequate to service the debt.



Reefer

Refrigerated container.

Relay

To transfer containers from one ship to another.

Ro/Ro

A shortening of the term "Roll on/Roll off." A method of ocean cargo service using a vessel with ramps that allow wheeled vehicles to be loaded and discharged without cranes.

Ship chandler

An individual or company selling equipment and supplies for ships.

Ship's tackle

All rigging, etc., used on a ship to load or unload cargo.

Side loader

A lift truck fitted with lifting attachments operating to one side for handling containers.

Spotting

Placing a container where required to be loaded or unloaded.

Spreader

A piece of equipment designed to lift containers by their corner castings.

Stack car

An articulated multiple platform rail car that allows containers to be double stacked.

Stacktrain

A rail service whereby rail cars carry containers

stacked two high on specially operated unit trains.

Stevedore

Individual or firm that employs longshoremen to load and unload vessels.

Stevedoring charges

Fees for loading and stowing or unloading a ship.

Sto-ro

A vessel with capacity for break-bulk cargo as well as vehicles or trailer borne cargo.

Stowage factor

The average cubic space occupied by one tonne weight of cargo as stowed aboard a ship.

Straddle carrier

Mobile truck equipment with the capacity for lifting a container within its own framework.

Sturdons

Port workers engaged in the stowage of cargo in the holds of a ship.

Supply chain

A logistics management system that integrates the sequence of activities from delivery of raw materials to the manufacturer through to delivery of the finished product to the customer into measurable components.

Tare weight

The weight of wrapping or packing; added to the net weight of cargo to determine its gross weight.



Terminal

An assigned area in which containers are prepared for loading into a vessel, train, truck, or airplane, or are stacked immediately after discharge from the vessel, train, truck, or airplane.

Terminal charge

A charge made for a service performed in a carrier's terminal area.

Throughput charge

The charge for moving a container through a container yard off or onto a ship.

Top off

To fill a ship that is already partly loaded with cargo. Typically occurs where there is a draught restriction at the first load port – the ship loads a quantity of cargo corresponding to the permissive draught, then fills up at the second port where there is no restriction.

Top stow cargo

Goods that are stowed on top of all others in a ship's hold because of their relatively low density and the probability that they would be damaged if overstowed.

Toplift

Attachment to a fork-lift truck that is designed to lift a shipping container.

Towage

Charges for the services of tugs assisting a ship or other vessels in ports.

Tramp line

An ocean carrier company operating vessels on other than regular routes and schedules.

Transshipment

A distribution method whereby containers are moved between large mother ships and small feeder vessels, or between equally large ships plying north-south (Europe-Africa) and east-west (Asia-Europe) routes.

Transshipment port

A port where cargo is transferred from one carrier to another or from one vessel of a carrier to another vessel of the same carrier without the cargo leaving the port.

Turnaround

The time it takes between the arrival of a vessel and its departure from port; frequently used as a measure of port efficiency.

Twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs)

Container size standard of twenty feet. Two twenty-foot containers (TEUs) equal one FEU. Container vessel capacity and port throughput capacity are frequently referred to in FEUs or TEUs.

Unitization

The consolidation of a quantity of individual items into one large shipping unit for easier handling.

Unloader

Port apparatus employed to unload ships carrying dry bulk cargo.

Unmoor

To remove the ropes that attach a ship to the shore.



Unstuff

To unload a shipping container.

Variable cost

Costs that vary directly with the level of activity within a short time. Examples include costs of moving cargo inland on trains or trucks, stevedoring in some ports, and short-term equipment leases.

Vessel manifest

Declarations made by international ocean carriers relating to the ship's crew and contents at both the port of departure and arrival. All Bills of Lading are registered on the manifest.

Warehouse

A place for the reception, delivery, consolidation, distribution, and storage of goods and cargo.

Waybill

Document, issued by a shipping line to a shipper, which serves as a receipt for the goods and evidence of the contract of carriage.

Wharf

Structure built alongside the water or perpendicular to the shore where ships berth for loading or discharging goods.

Wharfage

Charge assessed by a pier or dock owner against freight handled over the pier or dock or against a steamship company using the pier or dock.

Sources:

1. Dictionary of Shipping Terms, Third Edition, Peter Brodie (1997)
2. The Main Encyclopedic Dictionary, Fifth Edition, Eric Sullivan (1996)