

INTERMODAL FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION

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WHAT IS IT?

A cornerstone of freight movement in central Ohio is intermodal freight traffic. Intermodal freight is simply freight that moves via multiple modes (ship, rail, and truck).

However, the change in modes takes place without any handling of the freight itself. Intermodal freight normally transported in shipping containers. These containers come in various lengths; however when accounting for container volumes the standard unit is the twenty-foot container, which is referred to as a TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit). There are several advantages to using intermodal freight transportation. Foremost, this method allows the most efficient travel of freight over long, even intercontinental freight moves using multiple transportation modes. The method also improves security and controls damage/theft.



HISTORY

Modern intermodal traffic began during World War II when the US military used pallets to make the transfer of supplies between modes quicker. In the 1950's, companies began loading truck trailers on flat-bed rail cars. This arrangement is known piggy-backing or TOFC (trailer on flatcar) and is still used today. In the 1960s, modern containers began to

emerge as freight transportation method. As this method of shipping grew, the railroads developed double-stack railroad cars (also known as container on flatcar (COFC)). in the 1980s. Today, over 21 percent of railroad company revenue is generated by intermodal freight movement.

INTERMODAL IN CENTRAL OHIO

Ohio has historically been a crossroads for transportation since the national road, the canals, the early railroads, and the interstate system. Central Ohio's location led to our early development as a logistical center. Today, our location is just as critical, but when coupled with our efforts as a community to build the region as an inland port, our success keeps growing. Today, many major companies have located their logistics and distributions facilities in the region

because of this work to create an inland port. Currently, there are four railroad intermodal facilities in our region. Two of these facilities (Buckeye and Rickenbacker Yards) are connected to major double-stack railroad initiatives to improve linkages to the east coast ports that are projected to benefit the most from the expansion of the Panama Canal. These linkages will ensure central Ohio's continued success as an inland port and a key distribution center.

2010 CENTRAL OHIO INTERMODAL FREIGHT STATISTICS

- Rickenbacker Intermodal Yard (NS): 141,000 lifts
- Marysville/Honda Yard (CSX): 12,500 lifts
- Buckeye Yard (CSX): 180,000

2010 NATIONAL INTERMODAL FACTS

Top Container Importers

1. Wal-Mart
2. Target
3. Home Depot
4. Lowe's
5. Sears Holdings

Top Container Exporters

1. American Chung Nam
2. International Paper
3. Koch Industries
4. Weyerhaeuser
5. Dow Chemical

2010 Intermodal Statistics

In 2010, railroad intermodal volumes increased by 14.2% over 2009.

SOURCE: American Assoc. of Railroads