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Trucks carrying bonded shipments to the maquiladoras (i.e. Mexican export-assembly plants in free-trade zones along the U.S. border) are an exception. They are cleared through Mexican customs faster than normal shipments and within 24 hours (including transshipment) goods are usually on their way into Mexico.

There is currently no customs preclearing system in place for motor transport across the Mexico-U.S. border. Depending on customs and transshipment delays, total transit times from major Canadian cities to Mexico City can range between 6-15 days.

On January 24 1990, the Mexican government enacted new federal transport regulations which dramatically liberalized the domestic transport industry. The trucking sector was opened up to new competition, licensing procedures were simplified and route and freight restrictions were eliminated. Shippers are now free to book transport services with the carrier of their choice, exclusive agreements with carriers are no longer mandatory, freight rates are set by market forces and the maximum length of semitrailers has been extended from 40 to 48 feet in order to match U.S. standards and avoid unnecessary transshipment at the border. Lastly, the system of granting exclusive licenses for freight handling in the border zone was eliminated, although to date no American trucking lines have obtained operating licenses to service the maquiladoras directly. All told, these sweeping changes bode well for the improvement of trucking services in Mexico.

Several factors render it difficult to identify all of the many trucking companies operating in Canada which could handle Mexican-bound shipments. First, no detailed data is kept by any association or agency on trucking companies handling said shipments. Second, shipment destinations are difficult to determine because most Canadian trucking companies haul cargo down to transshipment points in the United States and interline with a U.S. carrier, rather than bringing it directly to the Mexico-U.S. border themselves. Lastly, numerous trucking companies are involved in providing direct or transshipment services. These companies include a diverse range of Canadian and American common carriers, contract carriers and private carriers.

Appendix B provides a list of certain organisations that exporters can contact to obtain information on trucking companies operating out of Canada handling Mexican-bound shipments.