

3. an all-inclusive door-to-door rate quote itemizing transportation costs paid to each carrier involved, documentation fees, currency and/or fuel surcharges, local cartage (at pick-up or delivery ends if necessary), duties (if any), insurance as required, and any fees for additional services undertaken by the forwarder;
4. estimated transit times;
5. liaison with U.S. customs officials;
6. information on the exact location of goods in transit (tracing); and,
7. a single invoice covering all costs involved in the movement.

Before finalizing an arrangement with any forwarder, you should specify all services you will require, check to see if special insurance arrangements are necessary, and ask if there are any other services the forwarder offers. Once you and the forwarder have arrived at a mutual understanding of the services to be performed, obtain a firm all-inclusive cost quote. **Avoid companies that will not commit themselves to a rate or that will let you know how much the cost is after the fact.** International freight forwarders serving Atlantic Canada exporters are listed on page 70.

Shippers' agents, another form of intermediary, will use any mode to satisfy a client's needs, but their main area of activity is in intermodal transportation. Many are effectively retail extensions of the railroads, offering single trailer rates to two individual shippers then shipping two trailers on a railway flatcar. Shippers' agents can obtain lower rates based on high traffic volumes through contracts with railways and pass these on to shippers. Their services include:

1. arranging door-to-door service for TOFC (Trailer on Flat Car) customers;
2. providing special equipment, e.g. refrigerated trailers;
3. providing complete door-to-door service from major consolidation points to major distribution centres;
4. paying the carrier(s) involved directly and presenting one invoice to the shipper;
5. contacting customs to verify the documents required for exporting goods; and,
6. consolidating LTL lots into full load shipments.

The main advantage of dealing with shippers' agents for intermodal services is that it can be faster and cheaper than negotiating with a railway. Deregulation of TOFC traffic in the United States has resulted in these large volume intermediaries being able to negotiate excellent contract rates with American railroads. Further, as important rail users, shippers' agents keep themselves