
b. Rail Containers

Sometimes the most time- and cost-efficient method of shipping goods involves more than one mode of transport. Railway container services make interlining transportation modes more efficient and more accessible to shippers. They also help reduce losses from breakage and theft, which is a feature common to other container operations.

While these containers are designed with rail transport dimensions, they offer such tremendous flexibility that individual containers can be offloaded at rail destinations and loaded directly onto highway flatbeds for immediate delivery to final destinations.

c. Intermodal Configurations

Developed by CN Rail and CP Rail to provide economic coast-to-coast movement of general freight, intermodal services interline rail, road and marine transport.

There are two basic kinds of rail intermodal services: import/export services, which combine rail service with marine container transport, and domestic services, which combine rail service with either COFC (Containers On Flat Cars) or TOFC (Trailers On Flat Cars) service.

d. Rail Container Terminals

Intermodal/container terminals are the backbone of intermodal services for both CN Rail and CP Rail. Such terminals can accommodate both import/export and domestic intermodal operations. Marine terminals, located at most of Canada's major ports, form the threshold of a network of import/export intermodal operations. Here ships take over from trains and trucks, providing the intermodal link to carry marine containers to and from the four corners of the earth. From here, as well, marine containers begin their journey inland to final destinations.

Inland rail terminals serve as mid-shipment destinations for marine containers. Here marine containers are trans-shipped to final destinations by truck. Inland rail terminals also function in domestic intermodal operations: domestic containers and truck trailers are "on-loaded" to rail flat cars for long-haul shipment and "off-loaded" to road transport equipment for delivery to final destinations.

Marine Transport

1. General Service Features

With sea on three sides and 30 per cent of the world's fresh water supply flowing in its rivers and lakes, Canada quickly developed extensive marine and inland water transportation systems and services.

While transportation by water is the slowest mode today, and the one most limited by geophysical conditions, it remains the most economical and energy-efficient way to move large-volume and high-density bulk commodities over long distances. Developments in marine transportation, such as containerized shipping of freight, have enhanced its importance to Canada's overseas trade.

2. International Marine Services

a. Liner Services

Liner services, which are regularly scheduled sailings on specific trade routes, are provided by conference and non-conference carriers.

Shipping Conferences: are an association of steamship lines covering the same trade route. The agreement between these lines can cover a multitude of details, but usually involves a basic written agreement among lines specifying the freight rates and services offered to shippers.

Shippers can bind themselves to the use of conference lines under provision of a "conference exclusive patronage" contract. Under such an agreement, a shipper may receive lower freight rates. Alternatively, some conferences may grant "deferred rebates" to shippers on a portion of the freight.

In return, shippers are obliged to route all or a specified portion of freight, or certain specified commodities, depending on the terms of the contract, exclusively by a conference line. The conference lines are thereby collectively guaranteed certain traffic.

To transport freight, the shipper may choose any line from among conference members, and all member lines can compete among themselves.