

To foster standardization among nations engaged in international trade and to establish the rights and responsibilities of all parties engaged in multimodal transportation, the International Chamber of Commerce has adopted and published *Uniform Rules for a Combined Transport Document* Publication #298). Combined transport documentation is not yet universally applicable or generally accepted.

Forwarder's Receipt/Bill of Lading

Upon agreement between buyer and seller, the seller may substitute a forwarder's receipt for the ocean bill of lading when providing documentation to the buyer (Figure 10).

a. Procedures

To obtain this document, the shipper will deliver the shipment to an international freight forwarder who will issue a receipt for it. The forwarder will consolidate a number of small shipments received from several sellers into one master shipment. The forwarder, acting as principal on behalf of these shippers, will then negotiate a contract for carriage of the consolidated shipment with a marine carrier. An ocean bill of lading is issued by the carrier to the forwarder.

In effect, in the initial transaction, the international freight forwarder acts as a "carrier" selling voyage space to the exporting shippers. The forwarder's receipt is therefore comparable to a bill of lading.

In the subsequent transaction, the forwarder acts as a "shipper" buying voyage space from the steamship line. The line's ocean bill of lading is therefore issued to the forwarder as shipper.

The forwarder sends this ocean bill of lading to its branch or agent at the point of discharge. Through this representative, the forwarder clears the shipment through customs and takes possession of the goods.

The individual buyers in turn present the forwarder's receipts sent to them by their respective shippers (exporters) and accordingly take possession of their parts of the master shipment.

b. Format

The format of the forwarder's receipt varies. The simplest form is a receipt indicating that delivery will be made to a named consignee. The more elaborate "forwarder's bill of lading" states that the forwarder undertakes to make delivery to the order of an identified party. In appearance, the forwarder's bill of lading resembles a carrier's bill of lading and will most likely state that the shipment is handled subject to the terms and conditions of the carrier's bill of lading.

In the event of loss or damage, the holder of the forwarder's receipt/bill of lading has recourse against the forwarder.

Air Waybill

The air waybill (AWB) may be used for only two types of transportation: the transportation of individual shipments and the transportation of consolidated shipments. For individual shipments put into a consolidated shipment for transportation by air, the consolidator or air freight forwarder must use its own "house air waybill," and not the carrier's AWB.

The AWB is a non-negotiable document consisting of three originals and six copies. Carriers may provide up to five additional copies, which are for internal use only.

Purposes and Functions. A typical AWB (Figure 11) contains 37 boxes requesting detailed information. The AWB is the most important cargo document issued by a carrier or its authorized cargo agents. It functions in a number of ways, and is:

- documentary evidence of the conclusion of a contract of carriage;
- proof of receipt of goods for shipment;
- a certificate of insurance, if the carrier's insurance is requested by the shipper;
- a customs declaration; and
- a waybill, that is, a guide to the carrier's staff in handling, dispatching and delivering the consignment.