

## Glossary of Shipping Terms

### A

**Aft** - Movement toward the back end (stern) of a ship.

**Agent** – A person authorized to transact business for and in the name of another person or company. Types of agents include: brokers, commission merchants, resident buyers, sales agents, and manufacturers.

**Alongside** -- A phrase referring to the side of a ship. Goods delivered ‘alongside’ are to be placed on the dock (or on a barge) within reach of the ship’s tackle so that they can be loaded.

**Ambient Temperature** -- The temperature around an item, or building or body.

**Anti-dumping duty** --- the fee (tariff) charged to discourage the sale of items produced at a government imposed discount.

### B

**Barrel (BBL)** --- A term of measure equal to 42 gallons of liquid at 600 degrees F.

**Beam** -- the width of a ship.

**Bill of Lading (B/L)** – a document that establishes the terms of a contract between a shipper (owner of the cargo) and a transportation company. It serves as a document of title, or a contract of transportation and receipt of products.

**Block Stowage** -- The stowing of cargo destined for a specific port of discharge close together to avoid unnecessary cargo movement.

**Bow** -- The front of a vessel

**Break Bulk** -- Loose, non-containerized cargo

**Broker** – a person who arranges for the transportation of goods and products for a percentage of the value of the products.

**Bulk Cargo** -- Not in packages or containers; shipped loose in the hold of a ship without markings and count. Grain, coal, petroleum and other liquids are usually bulk cargo.

**Bulkhead** -- A partition (similar to a wall) separating one part of a ship from another.

**Bunkers** -- Fuel used aboard ships. Coal storage areas aboard vessels in the past were in bins or bunkers.

## C

**Cabotage** – Water transportation between ports within the same nation; commonly refers to coastwise or intercoastal navigation or trade.

**Cargo** -- Products or goods loaded onto or off a ship

**Cargo Manifest** – A list of cargo carried on a specific vessel voyage.

**Cargo Tonnage** -- Most ocean freight is billed on the basis of weight measured in tons. Tons can be measured in short tons of 2000 pounds, long tons equaling 2,240 pounds or metric tons of 1000 kilograms (2,204.62 pounds).

**Carrier** -- Any person or company who, in a contract of carriage, undertakes to perform or to procure the performance of carriage by rail, road, sea, air, inland waterway or by a combination of such modes.

**Certificate of Origin** -- A certified document showing the origin of goods.

**Chassis** -- A frame with wheels and container locking devices in order to secure the container for movement.

**Cleat** -- a strip of wood or metal used to give additional strength to prevent warping or to hold something in place.

**Common Carrier** -- A transportation company which provides service to the general public at published rates.

**Container** -- A truck trailer body that can be detached from the chassis for loading into a vessel, a rail car or stacked in a container depot. Containers may be ventilated, insulated, refrigerated, flat rack, vehicle rack, open top, bulk liquid or equipped with interior devices. A container may be 20 feet, 40 feet, 45 feet, 48 feet or 53 feet in length, 8'0" or 8'6" in width, and 8'6" or 9'6" in height.

**Container Terminal** -- An area designated for the stowage of cargoes in containers, usually accessible by truck, railroad, and marine transportation.

**Containerized Cargo** – Cargo that is fit into a container.

**Container load** -- A load sufficient in size to fill a container either by cubic measurement or by weight.

**Controlled Atmosphere** -- Sophisticated, computer-controlled systems that manage the mixtures of gases within a container throughout a journey reducing decay.

**Cubic Foot** -- 1,728 cubic inches. A volume contained in a space measuring one foot high, one foot wide and one foot deep.

**Customhouse** -- A government office where duties are paid, import documents filed etc., on foreign shipments.

**Customhouse Broker** – A person or firm, licensed by the government of their country who engages in moving goods through the Customs process for a client.

**Customs** – Government agency charged with enforcing the rules passed to protect a country's import and export revenues.

## **D**

**Demurrage** -- A penalty charge against cargo owners or their representatives for delaying the carrier's equipment beyond the allowed free time.

**Devanning** -- The unloading of a container or cargo van.

**Displacement** – The weight, in tons (2,240 pounds) of the vessel and its contents. Calculated by dividing the volume of water displaced in cubic feet by 35, the average density of sea water.

**Dock** -- (1) for ships, a cargo handling area parallel to the shoreline where a vessel normally ties up. (2) For land transportation, a loading or unloading platform at an industrial location or carrier terminal.

**Dockage** -- The charge assessed against a vessel for berthing at a wharf, pier, or bulkhead structure, or for mooring to a vessel so berthed.

**D.O.T.** -- United States Government Department of Transportation

**Draft** -- The number of feet that the hull of a ship is beneath the surface of the water.

**Drayage** -- Charge made for local hauling by truck. Same as Cartage.

**Dry Cargo** -- Cargo that is not liquid and normally does not require temperature control.

**Dry-Bulk Container** -- A container constructed to carry grain, powder and other free-flowing solids in bulk.

**Dumping** -- Attempting to import merchandise into a country at a price less than the fair market value usually through some form of government subsidy by the exporting country.

## **E**

**Embargo** -- Order to restrict the hauling of freight.

**Eminent Domain** -- The power to take property for a necessary public use, with reasonable compensation.

**Entry** -- Customs documents required to clear an import shipment for entry into the general commerce of a country.

**Ethylene** -- A gas produced by many fruits and vegetables that accelerates the ripening and aging process.

**EXIM Bank** -- Abbreviation for Export-Import Bank for the United States. An independent U.S. Government Agency which facilitates exports of U.S. goods by providing loan guarantees and insurance for repayment of bank-provided export credit.

**Export** -- Shipment of goods to a foreign country.

## **F**

**Feeder Service** -- Cargo to/from regional ports are transferred to/from a central hub port for a long-haul ocean voyage.

**Feeder Vessel** -- A short-sea vessel which transfers cargo between a central hub port and smaller 'spoke' ports.

**FEU** -- Abbreviation for 'Forty-foot Equivalent Units.' Refers to container size standard of 40 feet. Two 20-foot containers or TEU's equal one FEU.

**Flat Car** -- A rail car without a roof or walls.

**Flat Rack/Flat Bed Container** -- A container with no sides and frame members at the front and rear. A flat bed container can be loaded from the sides and top.

**Force Majeure** -- the title of a common clause in contracts, excepting the parties for non-fulfillment of their obligations as a result of conditions beyond their control, such as earthquakes, floods or war.

**Foreign Trade Zone** -- A designated area divorced from Customs authority but under government control. Merchandise, except that which is prohibited, may be stored, displayed used for manufacturing, etc., in the zone without being subject to import duty regulations until the product leaves the Zone.

**Fork Lift** -- A machine used to pick up and move goods loaded on pallets.

**Free Port** -- A restricted area at a seaport for the handling of duty-exempted import goods, also called a Foreign Trade Zone or Free Trade Zone.

**Free Time** -- The amount of time that a carrier's equipment may be used without incurring additional charges. (See Storage, Demurrage or Per Diem).

**Freight** -- Refers to either the cargo or the charges assessed for carriage of the cargo.

**Freight Forwarder** -- A person whose business is to act as an agent on behalf of the shipper. A freight forwarder frequently makes the booking reservation.

## G

**GATT** -- Abbreviation for 'General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.' A multilateral treaty to promote trade by helping reduce trade barriers between the member nations through tariff concessions. The World Trade Organization (WTO) superseded GATT in 1994.

**Gross Tonnage** -- Applies to vessels, not to cargo measuring the volume in cubic meters of all enclosed spaces on the vessel.

**Gross Weight** -- Entire weight of goods, packaging and freight car or container, ready for shipment. Generally, 80,000 pounds maximum container, cargo and tractor for highway transport.

## H

**Import** -- To receive goods from a foreign country.

**In Bond** -- Cargo moving under Customs control where duty has not yet been paid.

**Inland Carrier** -- A transportation line that hauls export or import traffic between ports and inland points.

**Intercoastal** -- Water service between two coasts; in the U.S., this usually refers to water service between the Atlantic and Pacific or Gulf Coasts.

**Intermodal** -- Used to denote movements of cargo containers interchangeably between transport modes, i.e., truck, rail, water, and air carriers where the equipment is compatible within the multiple systems. Synonymous with multimodal.

**Jacob's Ladder** -- A rope ladder suspended from the side of a vessel and used for boarding.

## K

**KT** -- Kilo or metric ton (1,000 kilos or 2,204.6 pounds)

**Kilogram** -- 1000 grams or 2.2046 pounds

**Knot** -- One nautical mile (6,076 feet or 1852 meters) per hour. In the days of sail, speed was measured by tossing overboard a log which was secured by a line. Knots were tied to the line at intervals of approximately six feet. The number of knots measured was then compared against time required to travel the distance of 1000 knots in the line.

## L

**Lading** -- Refers to the freight shipped; the contents of a shipment.

**Letter of Credit (LC)** A document issued by a bank per instructions by a buyer of goods, authorizing the seller to draw a specified sum of money under specified terms.

**Lighter** -- An open or covered barge towed by a tugboat and used mainly in harbor and inland waterways to carry cargo to/from alongside a vessel.

**Liner** -- A vessel sailing between specified ports on a regular basis.

**Liter** -- 1.06 liquid U.S. quarts or 33.9 fluid ounces.

**Long Ton** -- 2,240 pounds

**Longshoreman** -- Individual employed in a port to load and unload ships represented by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) for all U.S. Pacific Ports.

**Low-Boy** -- A trailer or semi-trailer with no sides and with the floor of the unit close to the ground.

## M

**Manifest** -- Document that lists in detail all the bills of lading issued by a carrier or its agent or master for a specific voyage. A detailed summary of the total cargo of a vessel. Used principally for Customs purposes.

**Maritime** -- Business pertaining to commerce or navigation transacted upon the sea or in seaports in such matters as the court of admiralty has jurisdiction.

**Measurement Ton** -- 40 cubic feet

**Meter** -- 39.37 inches

**Metric Ton (MT)** -- 2,204.6 pounds or 1,000 kilograms

**Mile** -- A unit equal to 5,280 feet on land. A nautical mile is 6076.115 feet.

**Multimodal** -- Used to denote movements of cargo containers interchangeably between transport modes, i.e., truck, rail, water, and air carriers where the equipment is compatible within the multiple systems. Synonymous with Intermodal.

## N

**Nautical Mile** -- Distance of one minute of longitude at the equator, approximately 6,076.115 feet. The metric equivalent is 1852 meters.

**Net Weight** -- Weight of the goods alone without any immediate wrappings, e.g., the weight of the contents of a tin can without the weight of the can.

**Non-Vessel Operating Common Carrier (NVOCC)** -- A cargo consolidator in ocean trade who will buy space from a carrier and sub-sell it to smaller shippers. The NVOCC issues bills of lading, publishes tariffs and otherwise conducts itself as an ocean common carrier, except that it will not provide the actual ocean or intermodal service.

## O

**Ocean Bill of Lading** (Ocean B/L) -- A contract for transportation between a shipper and a carrier. It also evidences receipt of the cargo by the carrier. A bill of lading shows ownership of the cargo and, if made negotiable, can be bought, sold or traded while the goods are in-transit.

**Open Top Container** -- A container fitted with a solid removable roof, or with a tarpaulin roof so the container can be loaded or unloaded from the top.

**Overheight Cargo** -- Cargo more than eight feet high which thus cannot fit into a standard container.

## P

**Pallet** -- A platform with or without sides, on which a number of packages or boxes may be loaded to facilitate handling by a fork lift.

**Per Diem** -- A charge based on a fixed daily rate.

**Pier** -- The structure perpendicular to the shoreline to which a vessel is secured for the purpose of loading and unloading cargo. Synonymous with Dock and Wharf.

**Plimsoll Mark** -- A series of horizontal lines, corresponding to the seasons of the year in fresh or saltwater, painted on the outside of a ship marking the level which must remain above the surface of the water for the vessel's stability.

**Port of Discharge** -- Port where cargo is unloaded.

**Port of Entry** -- Port where cargo is unloaded and enters a country.

**Pre-Cooling** -- A process employed in the shipment of citrus fruits and other perishable commodities. The fruit is packed and placed in a cold room from which the heat is gradually extracted.

## Q

**Quarantine** -- A restraint placed on an operation to protect the public against a health hazard. A ship may be quarantined so that it cannot leave a protected point. During the quarantine period, the Q flag is hoisted.

**Quay** -- Pronounced 'key'. A structure attached to land to which a vessel is moored, synonymous with wharf , pier, dock.

## R

**Reefer** --- Refrigerated container also a refrigerated ship

**Revenue Ton** -- A ton on which the shipment is freighted. If cargo is rated as weight or measure (W/M) whichever produces the highest revenue will be considered the revenue ton. Weights are based on metric tons and measures are based on cubic meters.

**Ro/Ro** -- A shortening of the term 'Roll On/Roll Off.' A method of ocean cargo service using a vessel with ramps which allows wheeled vehicles to be loaded and discharged without cranes.

## S

**Ship Chandler** -- An individual or company selling equipment and supplies for ships.

**Ship Demurrage** -- A charge for delaying a vessel beyond a stipulated period.

**Ship's Tackle** -- All rigging, cranes, etc, utilized on a ship to load or unload cargo. Also called ship's gear.

**Shipper** -- A person or company who is actually the supplier or owner of the commodities shipped. Also called Consignor.

Ships:

**Bulk Carrier** - All vessels designed to carry bulk cargo such as grain, fertilizers, ore, and oil.

**Combination Passenger & Cargo Ships** -- Ships with a capacity for 13 or more passengers.

**Freighters** - Breakbulk vessels both refrigerated and unrefrigerated, containerships, partial containerships, roll-on/roll-off vessels and barge carriers.

**Barge Carriers** - Ships designed to carry barges; some are fitted to act as full containerships and can carry a varying number of barges and containers at the same time.

**General Cargo Carriers** -- Breakbulk freighters, car carriers, cattle carriers, pallet carriers and timber carriers.

**Full Containerships** -- Ships equipped with permanent container cells, with little or no space for other types of cargo.

**Partial Container Ships** – Multipurpose containerships where one or more but not all compartments are fitted with permanent container cells. Remaining compartments are used for other types of cargo.

**Roll-on/Roll-off Vessels** - Ships specially designed to carry wheeled cargoes

**Tankers** - Ships fitted with tanks to carry liquid cargo such as: crude petroleum, and petroleum products; chemicals, Liquefied gasses (LNG and LPG), wine molasses, and similar product tankers.

**Short Ton** -- 2,000 pounds

**Side Loader** - A lift truck fitted with lifting attachments operating to one side for handling containers.

**Sling** - A wire or rope contrivance placed around cargo and used to load or discharge it to/from a vessel.

**Spreader** -- A piece of equipment designed to lift containers by their corner castings.

**Starboard** - the right side of a ship when facing the bow. Left side is the Port

**Stern** -- the end of a vessel. Opposite of bow.

**Stevedore** - Individual or company that employs longshoremen and who contracts to load or unload ships.

**Stuffing** -- Putting cargo into a container.

## **T**

**Tariff** -- A publication setting forth the charges, rates and rules of transportation companies and ports. The book of rules and regulations along with specific charges published by a port.

**Terminal** -- An assigned area in which cargo is prepared for loading into a vessel, train, truck or airplane or is placed immediately after discharge from the vessel, train, truck or airplane.

**TEU** -- Abbreviation for 'Twenty foot Equivalent Unit'

## **V**

**Vanning** -- A term for stowing cargo in a container.

## **W**

**Wharfage** -- Charge assessed by a pier or dock owner (port) against freight handled over the pier or dock or against a steamship company using the pier or dock.