



13 Considerations for Choosing a Port for Your International Ocean Freight Shipping

There are many U.S. ports to choose from. Find out what to consider when selecting one for your container shipping.



Did you know there are more than 300 shipping ports in the United States?

As a shipper, that gives you many options for **international ocean freight**. And while it may be tempting to make your port selection based on cost alone, there are other equally important factors to consider before shipping your product.

In this guide, GlobalTranz outlines 13 questions shippers should consider (or ask themselves) when selecting a port for your international ocean freight. These will help you meet deadlines, avoid fees, save money and keep customers happy.

1 What kind of products are you shipping?

For standard shipments, companies can choose ports that are less expensive — regardless of where they are located. However, if you're shipping valuable items, perishable goods or urgent shipments, you may want to select a closer port. This will cut down on transit times and, in some cases, prevent damage.

2 How well does the port handle the customs process?

Customs are federally regulated. However, some ports have easier customs processes than others. For example, some ports may specialize in certain kinds of products and can process your shipment through customs much easier.

3 Can the port accommodate your specific shipment type with these solutions?

- » Services for oversized/over-dimensional and roll on/roll off cargo
- » Access to an experienced workforce for moving containers on/off ships
- » Access to reliable drayage carriers specializing in moving container freight
- » Specialization in the specific commodities that you are shipping or receiving
- » Capacity needed to avoid delays and get your shipment moved

East Coast vs. West Coast ports.

PRO TIP



Carriers concerned about the delayed contract negotiations between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) are avoiding the West Coast and using East Coast ports instead. To handle the increased activity, the eastern ports are investing in improved rail operations and infrastructures.



4 Does the port fit your timing needs?

The cheapest port option may not get your shipment delivered on time. If time is essential, consider the following when selecting a port:

- » Proximity to your warehouse
- » Proximity to customers/delivery site
- » Proximity to rail or easy access for over-the-road (OTR) transport

5 What are the different types of ports and why does it matter?

Understanding the types of ports to consider is paramount to saving money and meeting deadlines. So, when making a selection, consider these three options and determine how they best fit your shipping needs:

6 What is the origin and destination of the shipments?

- » Shipping port costs will vary depending on location and proximity to your factory or warehouse
- » Farther ports may add time to your shipment delivery but may also cost less
- » Closer ports may be more expensive but are better for urgent or valuable shipments

7 What's the size of the port?

- » Larger ports may offer better prices and access for vessels, trucks and more equipment
- » Smaller ports may be less congested and move freight faster through customs



MAIN PORT

Large capacity ports that serve as hubs and gateways for all ports

FEEDER PORT

Collects containers and ships them to main ports for further transport

DRY PORT

Connected by road or rail to a seaport for shipment to inland destinations





8 Does the port have reliable technology?

Just like your shipping operations, ports depend on innovative technology to thrive. However, not all ports have the same capabilities. Look for ports with:

- » High-level visibility and tracking of shipments
- » Efficient processes for booking shipments
- » Integrations with transportation management systems (TMS)

9 Is the port easily navigable?

Cutting costs may protect your bottom line. However, if your selected port is not equipped to meet your deadlines, you may end up with unhappy customers. Ensure your port has:

- » Easy access to waterways
- » Optimal harbor depth for smooth transit
- » Timely access to channels
- » Minimal or no congestion

10 Do you rely on Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) access?

Designated FTZs enable shippers to delay or not pay duties and taxes on imported or exported goods until they are transported. Consider FTZs against your budget to determine if this solution is right for you.

11 Does the port infrastructure suit your shipment's needs?

- » Can the port accommodate your shipment, particularly if it is large?
- » Will your shipment be affected by bridge heights, tunnel access and city congestion?

12 What is the risk of weather-related delays?

- » Some ports are more prone to natural disasters than others and may offer cheaper pricing
- » Inclement weather could put shipments at risk

13 How can a 3PL, like GlobalTranz, help with international ocean freight shipping?

GlobalTranz, an industry-leading third-party logistics (3PL) company, provides best-in-class **supply chain optimization** and **managed transportation** solutions to shippers of all sizes across the nation. Our team of logistics experts will help identify opportunities to save money and maximize operational efficiencies. That includes incorporating international ocean freight shipping and port selection into your shipping strategy. In particular, we provide:

- » Drayage transportation from the port to a nearby rail yard or an inland destination where it can be transferred to a truck for the remaining journey
- » Industry-leading network of **less-than-truckload (LTL)** and **full truckload (FTL)** carriers
- » Access to multiple warehouses for storage and/or disbursement
- » Negotiated pricing for OTR and ocean shipments
- » Accessibility to containers for less-than-container (LTC) and full-container (FTC) shipments
- » Expertise in reverse logistics and handling returns
- » Cheaper storage rates and extended storage time limits when needed

Reach out to our team of shipping experts!

Are you ready to save money and reduce hassles associated with international ocean freight shipping? **Schedule a consultation with our team of experts.**

