

International Shipping of Household Goods and Personal Effects using direct Service from International Sea freight Carrier Vs. Services provided by International Moving Companies

By AMID Logistics, LLC - <https://InternationalShippingUSA.com>

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This page is written in purpose to help inexperienced, first-time international shoppers to understand the difference between using service offered by U.S. international freight carriers versus hiring an international moving company. Since AMID Logistics is a licensed and bonded U.S. OTI – Ocean Transportation Intermediary – U.S. Freight Forwarder, this information mostly relates to international OCEAN FREIGHT by direct and indirect ocean freight carriers (Sea freight cargo consolidators, NVOCC, VOCC). Particularly to LCL (Less than Container Load) service.

First of all you should consider between convenience and price.

If, within your budget, you can afford convenience over the price, then you may search for a reliable international moving company. The international moving company's surveyor should visit you and estimate cost of labor on your international move, cost of packing materials etc on top of shipping cost. Some international moving companies offer "to door" service. That means they guarantee to dispatch your shipment from the beginning to the end, including assisting you in your cargo recovery in your destination country. I.e. they guarantee that they will work on your behalf with the country officials and seaport authorities, collect and pay your cargo release charges and fees, deliver and unload your goods at the place you need. We'd strongly suggest you to pay extreme attention to the second part of your service agreement with the international moving company, which relates to procedures on you cargo at the destination.

However, costs for using international moving companies are high. That is great if it is a business related moving and your employer pays the price. Otherwise you may need to consider an alternative. The alternative is to use direct service from international sea freight carriers.

Running ahead, you can always hire a domestic moving company to properly pack and deliver your goods to an ocean freight carrier terminal. Such terminals professionally called CFS – Container Freight Stations. In this case, we'd suggest you asking movers if they are familiar with international shipping rules and regulations. It may prudent to pay more, but to be insured that you will not get in troubles at the end of your international shipment due to improper packing your goods.

Yes, generally you can ship household goods or personal effects overseas using direct international ocean freight service instead of involving an international moving company in your overseas shipment. It is definitely much less expensive. But, unlike with international moving company, there are certain rules and limitations that you have to keep in mind.

Eventually all these rules and limitations are quite logical. Follow your common sense and everything will appear in order. However sometimes people, especially inexperienced, first-time shippers, consider a sizable international cargo shipment a mailing postal card overseas. Unfortunately, at the end, they will pay for mistakes they are done. Sometimes it may be significant price.

Here are most common customers' misunderstandings and mistakes on shipping LCL freight that we are facing in our practice. All these topics are already covered in our FAQ page. However in this page we try to concentrate on customer mistakes and give you examples:

1. If shippers have no credit line with shipping companies, then they have to pay deposits. Actual shipping cost most likely will differ from estimated shipping cost quoted.
2. It is shipper's responsibility to properly pack shipping goods.
3. If cargo pickup requested, then shipper must be prepared to meet LTL driver and, if necessary, to provide help on loading cargo into the pickup truck.
4. If cargo is going to be self-delivered to a line haul freight terminal for the transfer to an ocean freight carrier's terminal (CFS), then shipper should be prepared to deal on palletizing with the line haul terminal.
5. It is shipper's responsibility to submit all necessary shipping documents.
6. Ocean freight does not guarantee transit time.
7. If there is no prior special agreement, then responsibilities of ocean freight carrier are to get cargo to commerce zone of destination country. All issues related to import recovery at destination are consignee's (recipient of cargo) responsibilities.
8. It is consignee's responsibility to pickup released cargo at the destination freight terminal or arrange cargo delivery 'to door' of consignee.
9. Find more about shipping LCL freight with AMID Logistics, LLC.



1. If shippers have no credit line with shipping companies, then they have to pay deposits. Actual shipping cost most likely will differ from estimated shipping cost quoted.

Sometimes people ask us about COD (Cash on Delivery) or Freight Collect service. They are probably confused international cargo transportation service with sale of goods by mail order where payment is made on delivery rather than in advance. If the goods are not paid for, they are returned to the retailer. Some customers even complain on us that we do not initiate shipments for casual clients unless it is prepaid.

With all due respect, if you are first-time shippers with us, we welcome you to use our service. But you have to pre-pay at least 75% of estimated shipping cost calculated based on weight/measurements information provided by you in your booking request.

Also, you will receive our final invoice, less the deposit already paid, not upon arrival of your cargo to the destination, but at a time when your cargo departed from the USA. I.e. at a time when your sea freight bill of lading (which is the title on your shipping goods) will be generated. Sometimes we may invoice you upon a proof of your bill of lading. Find more about sea freight bill of lading in this link -

https://internationalshippingusa.com/Sea_Freight_Bill_Of_Lading.aspx

The invoice will be based on the actual weight/measurements of cargo you have shipped but on the estimated shipping cost calculated at a time of booking. In other words you pay for what you actually have shipped, but not that you had estimated to be shipped. If you overestimated your w/m, then you pay less. If you underestimated your w/m, you pay more. That's why we request 75% deposit, but 100%.

This billing practice is common in the industry. You may shop around and check it.

2. It is shipper's responsibility to properly pack shipping goods.

In order to use LCL service all your goods must be properly packed: boxed or crated and labeled. You may self-palletize your cargo or you can request to properly palletize and shrink wrap your loose boxes at ocean freight carrier's terminal (CFS). Palletizing will cost you approximately \$35-50 per pallet, depending on CFS. Palletizing also may increase chargeable volume of your cargo. However, this is the only way to ship number of boxes safely. Reliable carriers even not accept to ship more than 4-5 boxes being not palletized. Find more about palletizing in this link -

<https://internationalshippingusa.com/Palletizing.aspx>

At a glance these packing requirements may look complicated, but not at all. Use common sense. Your palletized boxes will be handled by forklift and professionally loaded in 40' multimodal container. Use moving boxes. Using heavy duty boxes are preferable but not absolutely necessary.

People ask if they can ship luggage cases, plastic bins etc. Yes, you can. Just insure that your packing is strong enough to keep the shape. Label every single item in case if your skid will be broken. AMID Logistics will provide you with a link to print your shipping labels.

People ask if it is safe to ship by sea in containers some valuables. What should we say? Almost everything that you see in Walmart came by sea in same containers. Add extra protection to your special items. Bubbles wrap it. Vacuum it. Hire a professional packing company. Majority of ocean freight shipments arrives without damages and lossless. If you consider an extra protection, then insure your cargo.

Do not include in your shipment!!:

1. Live plants, seeds and animals
2. Anything perishable
3. Avoid any drugs, food and liquids
4. No item considered dangerous or prohibited by your local USPS office
5. If you pack in used boxes, erase all former shipping labels and marks. Especially if it relates to dangerous goods or hazardous materials.

If you are not positive that some of your goods are legal to ship overseas, do not put your entire shipment at risk. Leave it. Do not ship. Or apply for legal assistance as in U.S. as in your destination country.

3. If cargo pickup requested, then shipper must be prepared to meet LTL driver and, if necessary, to provide help on loading cargo into the pickup truck.

In our LCL sea freight service, on cargo pickups, we use LTL carriers, but moving companies. LTL trucks are operating by single drivers. Then, on residential pickups, LTL driver may reject to handle bulky cargo since it is time and labor consuming.

Therefore, at a time of pickup, you have to be prepared to help to the driver with your cargo loading. Also you may need to call to the trucking company that will be assigned on your pickup in advance in order to discuss and conduct your pickup conditions.

4. If cargo is going to be self-delivered to a line haul freight terminal for the transfer to an ocean freight carrier's terminal (CFS), then shipper should be prepared to deal on palletizing with the line haul terminal.

On the one hand, line haul freight terminals are not obligated to palletize cargo. On the other hand they always palletize loose boxes in order to handle cargo by forklifts.

According to our experience, typically line haul freight terminals accept loose boxes and palletize it without questions asked. However, occasionally, they may request to palletize boxes in order to accept ones or charge a fee for to palletize boxes.

In order to avoid confusions at a time of delivery, you may contact your line haul terminal in advance to conduct the business.

Note: Do not confuse palletizing boxes at line haul freight terminals with palletizing at ocean freight carriers' terminals (CFSs).

CFSs should always offer palletizing and shrink wrapping service for approximately \$35-50 per pallet. CFSs also should re-palletize improper pallets to obey ISPM15 rules.

For more information refer to this link –

<https://internationalshippingusa.com/Palletizing.aspx>

4. It is shipper's responsibility to submit all necessary shipping documents

All ocean carriers follow the same rule: "No docs, no ship". That means that your cargo cannot be released to the international shipment unless all necessary export documents are in order and submitted to carrier. If cargo already submitted to the origin Container Freight Station - CFS, but some documents are missing, it will stay on hold at the CFS till all necessary documentation be present or taking back by the shipper. Free storage time is limited. Depends on CFS it varies from week to a few weeks. Then storage charges will begin accumulating. If shipper decides to return his cargo, then to get a release on the return he must to pay in/out fee on top of storage.

Do not delay with your export documents. Prepare and submit it in advance or latest on the day after your cargo delivered and stored at CFS.

IMPORTANT! Do not enclose your shipping documents in your cargo. Do not write list of enclosure on boxes. It may attract thief. All documents must be submitted electronically.

Looks too complicated? Not at all.

In general, most important that you submit a commercial invoice that lists items you ship and the value in US\$. Find more about commercial invoice in this link - https://internationalshippingusa.com/Commercial_Invoice_In_Sea_Freight.aspx

People ask: This is my household goods shipment. How can I get the commercial invoice?

The answer is: It is easy. If you ship household goods or personal effects then you're listing your items and assign value on it by your own. That's it. This document is called Valued Packing List. AMID Logistics will provide you with a link to submit your Valued Packing List online in prefilled form. Find more about Valued Packing List in this link - https://internationalshippingusa.com/Packing_List_In_Sea_Freight.aspx

Good news: When you're writing Valued Packing List on your household goods or personal effects you do not have to list very spoon and fork that to ship. Provide general description like: Used tableware.

Bad news: Avoid too uncertain descriptions in your Valued Packing List like '17 boxes with mixed household goods. Total value is \$2,499'. It may be OK to get it departed from U.S. However, destination country's Customs may ask you for more detailed list.

Depending on destination country, ocean freight carrier may ask shippers for some additional documents, copies of photo IDs, tax info etc. However there should not be anything complicated to get and provide. Freight Forwarder should inform and guide you in essential documentation necessary to obtain release for your goods to depart from the USA.

NOTE: If you export cargo valued US\$2,500 and higher, then you must submit U.S. Shippers Export Declaration (SED). You can submit Shippers Export Declaration by yourself or AMID Logistics will file it on your behalf for \$35. Read more about Shippers Export Declaration in this link - https://internationalshippingusa.com/US_Shippers_Export_Declaration_SED.aspx

When you use direct sea freight service from ocean freight carriers IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND that as soon as your goods are entered into commerce zone of your destination country, all issues related to the import recovery, including providing all required by destination's Customs import documentation, is consignee's responsibilities (in respect of dealing with Customs professionally called 'Imposter of records'). Neither freight forwarder nor ocean freight carrier will be able to assist you in it.

However, with LCL Sea freight you are not alone. With LCL, your bill of lading always contains contact information of ocean freight carrier's destination agent. The agent should issue to your consignee an official arrival notice and guide you in the complexity of your import recovery. Read more about arrival notice in this link - https://internationalshippingusa.com/Arrival_Notice_In_Sea_Freight.aspx

Finally always remember that it is you ship goods overseas. Freight forwarders and carriers are assisting your needs. Then it is only shipper's and consignee's responsibility to submit

all necessary shipping documents that will be required by sea freight carrier, origin and destination countries officials and third parties involved in your international shipment.

5. Ocean freight does not guarantee transit time.

If your shipment is time sensitive, then upon receipt a freight quote, you may ask us for nearest vessels schedule.

Most of the time sea freight shipments depart and arrive as scheduled. However delays may occur. Reasons for delays are not just weather conditions. Your multimodal LCL shipment's transit time depends on cargo and documents cutoff at CFS, tracking or rail traffic, hubs and seaport conjunctions and many more other factors.

Sorry to say that, but if you ship sea freight, then be prepared for delays.

6. If there is no prior special agreement, then responsibilities of ocean freight carrier are to get cargo to commerce zone of destination country. All issues related to import recovery at destination are consignee's (recipient of cargo) responsibilities.

We do our best to make you international shipment with us as easy and predictable as possible. We are proud of our business. Our customer satisfaction survey index is 94%. We continuously receive feedbacks from our clients. Many from them returns and ship with us again and again. You may see AMID Logistics customer reviews in this link - <https://internationalshippingusa.com/ClientTestimonials.aspx>

Regrettably, sometimes we receive complaints. Most often complaints that we face in our practice are complaints related to cargo recoveries at destinations. What is the characteristic that almost all such complaints we receive from first-time, inexperienced exporters.

Above is already explained about responsibilities on providing proper documentation on international sea freight shipments. However, providing proper documentation is not the only issue on import recovery.

IMPORTANT!!: Since you made your decision to ship goods from U.S. overseas you must clear understand that as soon as your goods will exit U.S. Commerce zone, U.S. laws not apply on your freight. Neither U.S. freight forwarder nor ocean freight carrier will be able to manage your import recovery. No one but your consignee (in respect of import recovery professionally called Importer of Records) can be aware of circumstances that may lead to problems.

Yes, International Maritime Laws should apply on your freight. But depending on country that you ship to, the Laws may be interpreted in different way. Do not say about other subjective factors peculiar only to your destination country.

What we can suggest you if for some reasons you will experience problems on recovery of your LCL sea freight shipment at the destination?:

1. If for any reasons you will not be contacted by sea freight carrier's destination agent on/in a few days prior ETA (Estimated day of Arrival), do not delay and contact them first. The contact info is in your bill of lading.

2. Always request a legal Arrival Notice. Your Arrival Notice must be dated and contain agent's letterhead and destination charges breakdown in it. Phone calls or random email are not enough.
3. Properly work with sea freight carrier's destination agent. Respect agent's job. Their business is to get your goods for you as soon as possible. Follow agent's instructions. Pay destination charges and fees (sometimes called Local Charges) and possess your released goods.
4. If you face a problem do not hesitate to contact us. However, if you will not provide a copy of your legal Arrival Notice, most likely we be unable working with the carrier on your behalf. I.e. we will always need a copy of your Arrival Notice.

REMEMBER: IMPORT RECOVERIES ARE TIME SENSITIVE! As quickly you begin working on it as less probably that you will get the deadline penalties: storage, demurrage, Customs penalties etc.

7. It is consignee's responsibility to pickup released cargo at the destination freight terminal or arrange cargo delivery 'to door' of consignee.

Often people request us for 'door-to-door' service.

With our LCL Sea freight there is no 'door delivery' service offered.

At origin, in U.S. you can self-deliver your boxed or crated cargo to a freight terminal OR we can arrange a pickup of your boxed or crated cargo from your door.

However, your goods will be shipped to a bonded warehouse in your destination country (not to door). Cleared with destination country Customs and released by the destination terminal (CFS), your cargo must be self-picked up from the CFS by consignee.

Most ocean freight carrier's destination agents/CFSs offer delivery service for an additional cost. Otherwise shipper may hire a local cartage company to arrange a pickup of released goods from the terminal to be delivered to the door of consignee.

Read more about destination (local) charges in this link -

<https://internationalshippingusa.com/Export from USA.aspx#ExpDestChrgs>

9. Find more about shipping LCL freight with AMID Logistics, LLC.

Using ocean freight services offered by international shipping companies (International Freight Forwarders, NVOCCs, VOCCs) for international shipping of household goods or personal effects by sea means an international shipping of properly packed not-commercial goods that will be used for personal needs, not for sale. I.e. you may consider cost-effective and reliable international shipping services provided directly by international shipping companies instead of hiring a costly international moving company.

However, if you are a first-time international shipper and you are not quite familiar with general procedures in international shipping of ocean freight then:

WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND READING FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) IN OUR WEBSITE BEFORE STARTING SCHEDULING YOUR INTERNATIONAL OCEAN FREIGHT SHIPMENT.

It should help you getting international shipping procedures with your ocean freight and the international shipping cost to be predictable and understandable.

- FAQ on EXPORT OF LCL OCEAN FREIGHT FROM USA - https://internationalshippingusa.com/Export_from_USA.aspx
- FAQ on IMPORT OF LCL OCEAN FREIGHT TO THE USA - https://internationalshippingusa.com/Import_%20to_USA.aspx

You may find more information related to international shipping of household goods and personal effects in this link as well –

https://internationalshippingusa.com/Shipping_Personal_Goods.aspx

American Multimodal International Deliveries - **AMID Logistics, LLC is an U.S. International shipping company**, fully licensed and bonded U.S. OTI: Freight Forwarder. As long as you are familiar with general procedures in the International Ocean Freight Shipping Industry, you may consider using international shipping services and costs offered by our company for international shipping of household goods or personal effects overseas. I.e. consider and compare international ocean freight shipping rates and services from international transportation companies Vs. international moving companies.

NOTE: IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO CLEARLY UNDERSTAND, WHICH KIND OF SEAFREIGHT SERVICE YOU ARE GOING TO USE! For your convenience we have separated our U.S. Real-time Online Seafreight Calculators by sub-domains for different kinds of seafreight services:

- LCL ocean freight (Less than Container Load): International shipping of boxed, crated and/or palletized cargo by sea. Consolidated ocean freight. Note that you may use an LCL seafreight service for shipping both types of freight: either commercial cargo or household goods or personal effects.
The related domain is - <http://InternationalShippingUSA.com>
IMPORTANT!: LCL seafreight service CANNOT be used for shipping motor vehicles*
- FCL COMMERCIAL CARGO (Full Container Load): Shipping entire containers that contain a commercial cargo.
The related sub-domain is - <http://Containers.InternationalShippingUSA.com>
IMPORTANT!: You must NOT use pricing schedule in this sub-domain on international shipping of Household Goods and Personal effects! Shipping rates and procedures for commercial cargo are different from international shipping of Household Goods and Personal effects. For shipping Household Goods and Personal effects use other sub-domains below.
- FCL with HOUSEHOLD GOODS/PERSONAL EFFECTS: International shipping of entire seafreight containers containing Household Goods and/or Personal effects that are not for sale, but for personal use only.
The related sub-domain is <http://Householdgoods.InternationalShippingUSA.com>
IMPORTANT!: No motor vehicles* can be included! Export motor vehicles require special customs formalities and procedures. If you ship motor vehicles
- FCL containing MOTOR VEHICLES*: International shipping of entire containers with consolidated motor vehicles consolidated in multimodal ocean freight containers.
The related link is <http://Cars.InternationalShippingUSA.com>
- International shipping RO-RO: International shipping cars, trucks, trailers, boats, heavy equipment etc from the USA overseas.
The related link is <http://Ro-Ro.InternationalShippingUSA.com>

* In respect of international shipping, motor vehicles mean vehicles such cars, motorcycles, boats, jet ski etc that require a registration with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).