



Global Shipping Conditions - 1st January 2025

ENVIROMENT AGENCY

A shipment of personal effects was recently stopped by the Environment Agency, as they could not ascertain that the goods being shipped were not classed as waste. While that container was subsequently released once the moving company provided evidence, the time wasted and the storage charges accrued were not insignificant. Additionally, the Environment Agency were insisting that having electrical items PAT tested was the only method to prove their functionality and therefore not waste.

Following this, the BAR undertook discussions with the Environment Agency, to better clarify the requirements around moving personal effects. The Environment Agency agreed that for shipments that contained electrical items that were commensurate with a typical HHG shipment, PAT tests would not be mandatory. They also committed to minimising disruptions to legitimate HHG shipments, but emphasised their need to still inspect containers that were suspected of containing waste goods.

Your moving company will be able to advise further but the need to PAT test every electrical item for shipment no longer exists. However, the Environment Agency retains the authority to inspect and stop any container, which is completely out of control of your moving company.

SHIPPING LINE ALLIANCES:

Shipping lines operate "alliances", in which they vessel share on a particular route, and these are changing for 2025. Hapag-Lloyd have signed a long-term agreement with Maersk Lone that starts in February 2025, called the Gemini Cooperation, and they leave their current alliance "THE Alliance" at the end of January 2025. The remaining "THE Alliance" partners, Yang Ming, HMM, and ONE, from which Hapag now leaves, have rebranded themselves the "Premier Alliance", and have concluded a vessel-sharing agreement (VSA) with the MSC, covering nine Asia-Europe services. Lastly MSC, who currently partner Maersk on the 2M service, announced a new standalone east-west service network.

The reason we explain this, is these changes will cause operational disruptions during the transition period, and we have already started to experience issues as the shipping lines move their vessels accordingly. Ports may well no longer be served, routing and the associated transit times may change and increase, vessel frequency and or capacity might change. So moving companies and consumers alike need to be aware of this possibility during upcoming months.

STATE OF THE MARKET:

North America from Europe (shipments to USA, Canada & Mexico)

The USA Longshoremen have again tabled strike action, should their demands not be met, which is scheduled to start as of the 20th January 2025. This will impact all U.S. East and Gulf Coast port and cause severe delays and disruption.



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Shipping lines are already implementing contingencies, with notices of severe delays and the application of Work Disruption Surcharge's which will add upwards of USD1000 per TEU to freight costs, for shipments that "gate in" on or after the 20th January 2025. Extended dwell times for shipments already on route are expected, which may result in additional storage charges.

Additionally, due to the removal of capacity by the shipping lines, the Trans-Atlantic trade remains oversubscribed in that customer demand is now greater than the carrier's vessel capacity. Consequently, this causes rates to increase, and delays and cancellations to become more common.

The most noticeable challenge to someone moving, will be the increased notice required to secure space on a vessel, and the inevitability of delays. The likelihood of a container being rolled, left off its intended vessel and moved to a later vessel, or total cancellation of the booking, if this happens it is totally outside of the mover's control.

While the BAR movers benefit from negotiated annual freight contracts, occasionally they are forced to accept a new surcharge to safe guard our space allocation. Hapag Lloyd, recently announced a Peak Season Surcharge (PSS) for the transatlantic trade that will be applied to the mover's contracts as of the 1st October 2024. This will add \$300 per 20ft Container and \$400 per 40ft container to the cost of the freight.

Eastbound trades from Europe (shipments to Asia, Oceania, India, and Middle East).

The diversion around the Cape of Good Hope for Eastbound trades due to conflict in the region is now well established and schedules are usually followed. Consumers should understand for Eastbound trades the now longer transit times are the norm, and there is still no estimate as to when passage through the Suez Canal will be safe.

However, the omission of Middle East calls on some of the shipping lines services to Asia, are beginning to severely impact services to this region. The services that call Middle East ports are extremely full and void sailings where carriers realign their services are causing a backlog of shipments.

Hapag-Lloyd commented:

The IOS/IO3 services are already jam packed full and void sailings are not helping shipping lines move cargo. It's actually creating roll pools that can't be cleared that easily. It also doesn't help that Southampton port is not being omitted on the next 2 sailings which again create backlogs.

Any shipper, the BAR members included has a set allocation on these vessels and when cargo is rolled that eats into the next sailing's available space.

Similarly, for shipments to Oceania, we are again seeing some congestion in the Transshipment ports in Asia, which has been causing some containers to be rolled multiple times, with the associated delays this causes.

Consequently, the most noticeable challenge to someone moving, will be the possibility of the increased notice required to secure space on a vessel, and the inevitability of increased transits times or delays. Additionally, the likelihood of a container being rolled, left off its intended vessel and moved to a later vessel is increasing as shipping lines manage their volumes, if this happens it is totally outside of the mover's control.



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The increasing freight costs for export shipments from Asia, is now impacting other routes, capacity reallocation is beginning to cause space issues on export trades from Europe, especially to North and South America.

Lastly this is a very fluid situation, shipping lines are often reacting to unexpected developments so the situation can always change rapidly.

It's suggested that customers be transparent and plan moving dates in advance with their chosen mover to allow sufficient time to book appropriate vessels, move belongings and ensure their moving schedule is met.

Southbound trades from Europe (South, East, and West Africa):

No change. Where a shipping Line does offer a service on a given route to this area, it is usually quite reliable. However, many Hinterland destinations (usually served via main ports with overland on-carriage to inland freight terminals) have been removed from the Shipping Line schedules because of lengthy main port congestion and or poor on-carrying transport infrastructure. This has caused a reduction of the main destination ports of call coverage across much of this region, especially the Indian Ocean Islands.

Latin America trades from Europe (South America East & West Coasts & Caribbean):

No change. Where a shipping Line does offer a service on a given route to this area, it is usually quite reliable. But for these destinations, the clearance and release of a container can take a substantial amount of time, which is usually longer than the free storage a shipping line offers. Consequently, storage charges may accrue.

Ultimately, severe service challenges, short-notice changes to container bookings, and variable freight rates, despite downward trends, will be reflected in your BAR mover's inter-continental door-to-door quotation and terms.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Shipping lines, continue to update and change their documentation processes, the latest development is the roll out of ISC2, this is an EU requirement where any shipment, who's vessel docks at an EU port following its departure from the UK will need to provide information regarding the shipper of the goods. Therefore, consumers should be aware that moving companies may well need to request more sometimes personal information, however this is at the behest of the EU or shipping line and out of the moving companies' control.

The quality of container equipment utilised by shipping lines has diminished, largely due to the additional number of containers needed to service Asia via Cape of Good Hope. The frequency, where a container is delivered, that is unsuitable for the transport of Household goods, which the mover will be obliged to reject, has risen dramatically. While another container will usually be provided, this can result in delays, missed vessels and additional haulage charges, through no fault of the mover.

Shipping Line ONE LINE has just confirmed that they will not ship personal effects of assignees holding Russian passports. We are still reaching out to other shipping lines for their positions. But Russian passport holders need to be cautious when planning to move and ensure that the shipping line used can clear their goods at destination. As the accrued storage charges should there be a dispute could be significant.



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We have heard of some shippers experiencing issues with loading fridge's and freezers with shipping lines. While both Hapag Lloyd and ONE Line have confirmed they can carry them, they caveated this acceptance, with the shipper being responsible for declaring them as hazardous if and when necessary. Consequently, any misdeclaration could be met with fines, and or the need to remove the goods from the container.

UK HAULAGE

The recent container road-haulage challenges due to a lack of drivers experienced across the UK has much improved in response to easing demand, with the majority of shipping lines withdrawing their Driver Retention surcharge (DRS). During the prior driver shortage, most moves were transhipped from van to sea-container, via loading at the movers warehouse, which safeguarded against substantial additional costs associated with a container no show at the customers residence. Whilst the preference is to direct load containers at customer residence whenever possible, it must be noted that most container-hauliers prefer the certainty of collecting from the movers warehouse. This is particularly the case in and around busy cities with difficult parking, poor access to residence and increasing prevalence of Low Emission Zone surcharges. So, customers are cautioned that direct residence loading is prone to container no-shows or last-minute rejections, whereas loading via the mover's warehouse offers much greater certainty.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE DIFFERENCES

Shipping Line's container-freight rates and ancillary charges are usually quoted by them in foreign currency, mainly US Dollars and Euros for sea-freight, and local destination currency for port and on-carriage charges. These 'freight charges' are, however, payable in British Pounds (GBP) and converted typically at time of the ships' sailing date, applying the currency exchange rate at that point in time. BAR Movers generally will include these container-freight costs in their GBP quotation offered to the customer using the indicative exchange rate(s) valid at the time of their quotation. Customers should therefore expect an adjustment of the mover's final invoice versus quotation, reflecting the actual exchange rate applied by the Shipping Line at time of despatch. A BAR Mover has no control over the actual exchange rate used and applied by the Shipping Line.

FUEL COST CHANGES

Sea container freight contracts are subject to periodical ships fuel (bunkering) cost reviews. This is a mechanism applied by Shipping Lines which compares the average price of bunkering quarter-on-quarter and then adjusts the rate either up or down based on the change. With the well-publicised energy supply issues, bunkering increases adding to the overall sea-container freight cost are highly probable. We have seen increases as much as US Dollars 350 per container in recent examples.

PORT STRIKES

No strikes at UK Ports are currently scheduled that we are aware of, however customers should be aware of the impact of potential future strike actions which invariably cause unexpected delays to both outbound (export) and inbound (import) shipments, particularly the inbound UK customs clearance time and subsequent container deliveries.



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LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES

The acceptance of 'Li-ION' batteries in household and personal effects shipments is a complicated subject. There is a widely reported increased fire risk associated with these batteries. Shipping Lines themselves are so far inconsistent in standardising their rules for their inclusion or exclusion from a consignment. Typically, we experience that Shipping Lines will decide on a shipment by shipment basis whether Li-ION batteries can be included. This extends to all and any items which may require such power units, examples include but not limited to cordless power tools, laptops, e-scooters, e-bikes and similar.

BAR Overseas Group recommends that Li-ION batteries are NOT shipped. If, however, you include them in your shipment, your moving company is likely required to declare the shipment as 'Hazardous Cargo'. This is not as simple as it sounds. Firstly, your mover must obtain the shipping line's permission to include *Li Ion Batteries as hazardous cargo* (not all carriers accept). Next, you will incur a substantial freight surcharge, driving up your cost of shipping. The rules for including hazardous material in a shipment are fastidious; it will also impact the time it takes to secure a confirmed container space booking on a ship.

The instances, where a shipment including a Li-ION battery is accepted with one shipping line, but scheduled to sail on a partner line vessel, which does not allow Li-ION batteries are becoming more common. The costs involved due to the significant delays or the requirement to return the container to remove the Li-ION batteries should this occur, can be substantial.

Failure to declare Li-ION batteries (or other hazardous goods) in a shipment, whether by intent or in error, is treated by the Shipping Line as a **misdeclaration**. This is a serious offence under maritime law and would lead to a substantial fine (payable by the customer) (currently circa 30,000 US Dollars); in addition, the Shipping Line could confiscate and dispose of the consignment.

IN CLOSING

We assure all customers that your BAR Overseas mover is highly experienced and will always use their best endeavours for an efficient and trouble-free overseas move. This update is intended to provide you with unbiased information on the state of shipping, and its many challenges. If you have any questions, please contact your BAR mover.



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