

What is Intermodal?

Intermodal uses multiple modes of transportation – trucks, ships and trains – to transport a huge variety of the goods Americans use every day. This system combines each mode’s strength to produce the most efficient freight movement.

Beginning the Journey

A typical intermodal journey begins at a manufacturing facility where containers are packed and loaded onto trucks or rail cars. Railroads have invested billions on new intermodal terminals, track upgrades and other infrastructure projects that provide customers, large and small, with access to intermodal.

Moving Between Modes

Freight is transferred from trucks to trains at intermodal transfer facilities. Railroads offer the most cost-effective freight movement for shippers moving goods over long distances. Using rail reduces the impact of fuel and maintenance costs and truck driver shortages.

The Final Destination

The typical intermodal journey ends at a port where containers are exported overseas or at another intermodal facility where containers are loaded onto trucks for delivery to a retail, warehousing or manufacturing location. By using this highly efficient and cost-effective form of freight movement, U.S. businesses have a competitive advantage in the global marketplace.