

Guide To LTL Accessorial Charges

Are you a shipper who's looking to get a better handle on what accessorial charges apply to your LTL shipments? Accessorials can differ from one shipper to another depending upon what you ship, where you ship, and many other things that pertain to your business. We lay it all out so it's easy to understand which accessorial charges apply to your LTL shipments and which ones you may never have to worry about.



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CHAPTER ONE

What Is an Accessorial Fee?

An accessorial fee is an extra charge that is billed on less-than-truckload (LTL) shipments for any additional services required to handle the freight. For example, this might include a destination charge for shipments being delivered to schools or farms, or extra handling for hazardous materials.

In addition, LTL carriers assess a fuel surcharge that fluctuates based on the Department of Energy diesel fuel index.

CHAPTER TWO

Why Are Accessorial Fees Charged?

Understanding why accessorial fees are charged goes back to the fundamentals of how LTL shipping works.

An LTL shipment is handled much differently (and more frequently) than a truckload shipment. Generally, a truckload shipment is picked up and delivered by the same driver, in the same trailer, from Point A to Point B. An LTL shipment will almost always be driven by multiple drivers and loaded from one trailer to another as it makes its way from origin to destination.

LTL carriers combine shipments from multiple customers that are moving the same direction or headed to the same geographic delivery area to optimize the usage of their equipment and drivers. With that being said, if freight takes up more space, requires more equipment, needs extra handling, or any other special requirements, it is slowing down other customers' freight. So, a carrier must charge accordingly to make up for any lost time moving other shipments on the truck.

CHAPTER THREE

What Are the Most Common Accessorial Fees?

Here's a list of common accessorial fees and their descriptions:

After Hours Delivery/Pickup Fee: Imposed on any shipment that is outside of the general pickup/delivery window of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Bill of Lading (BOL): Correction Fee: Imposed when an incorrect BOL is used, or if a correction has to be made to the BOL once the shipment has been picked up.

Canadian Border Crossing Fee: Charged for shipments that are crossing the Canadian border.

Convention, Exhibition, and Tradeshow Delivery/Pickup: Applies to any shipment that is delivered or picked up from a convention, exhibition, or tradeshow.

Excess Length Fee: This varies between carriers, but as a general rule, this may be applied to any shipment over 10' in length.

Grocery and Food Warehouse Delivery/Pickup Fee: Applies to any shipment that is delivered or picked up from a grocery or food warehouse.

Hazardous Cargo Charge Fee: Applies to any shipment that contains hazardous chemicals or substances.

CHAPTER FOUR

How Can I Avoid Surprise Accessorial Fees?

Often, when getting an LTL freight quote, the price quoted by the carrier or 3PL is a base line price. This means the quote reflects only the cost of shipping the product from point A to point B without taking possible accessorial fees into account. This is why it's important to be as transparent as possible with your shipping provider regarding pick-up and drop-off locations, loading and unloading situations, timeframes for pick-up and delivery, and any other special requirements you may have.

Giving your shipping provider as much information as possible before they put together a quote for you will uncover any potential accessorial fees that will be assessed for the shipment. No one likes big surprises on their shipping bill, so this can help avoid them.



CHAPTER FIVE

Why Are Accessorial Fees Different Between LTL Carrier?

Each LTL carrier has their own tariffs and fees, and these can either be based on the weight of the shipment or simply be flat rates. This, combined with negotiated pricing, can really cause large differences in accessorial fees from carrier to carrier.

Here's a real example of a lift gate fee for a shipment going from Seaford, DE to Buford, GA at 4,600 lbs:

Carrier A flat fee: \$62.50

Carrier B flat fee: \$109.88

Carrier C charges 8 cents per pound: \$368

Carrier D charges 10 cents per pound: \$460

As you can see, the exact same shipment could have a lift gate delivery fee ranging from \$62.50 to \$460, depending on the LTL carrier.

Working with a 3PL, like Trinity Logistics, will widen the pool of LTL carriers available to move your shipments. The more carriers you have access to, the higher the chance that you can secure the best rate possible, taking both your shipment and its accessorial fees into account. If you were trying to route your own shipment, you might only have access to Carrier D, and pay top dollar for your lift gate fee, but working with Trinity can ensure that Carrier A is also in the mix.

CHAPTER SIX

How Can I Get an Accurate Quote for the Cost of Shipping My LTL Freight?

To receive an accurate quote, refer to this handy checklist and be sure to send your LTL shipping provider all of the following information:

- The number of pallets
- The total weight of the shipment
- The pallet dimensions (L x W x H)
- Whether or not the pallets are stackable
- The origin zip code and delivery zip code
- The type of goods you are shipping and how they are packaged
- The freight class
(if you know it – if not, the LTL provider can determine this)
- Any known accessorial fees or special needs for pickup/delivery

If you have an LTL shipment you need to get a quote for, we can provide you with one! As a third party logistics provider, we have contracts with multiple LTL carriers. Get a better deal on your LTL shipments by taking advantage of our contracted rates – [fill out our easy online quote form!](#)