What is Intermodal Transportation?

Freight is picked up at the shipper’s dock in an intermodal trailer or container, delivered by truck to the nearest intermodal rail terminal, loaded onto a specially-designed railroad flatcar, moved by train for hundreds of miles, and then delivered to the final destination by truck.

Intermodal carries a variety of freight, including raw materials, parts and components, consumer goods, parcels and US Mail. Thousands of full truckload shipments are transported daily via a combination of truck and rail.
Intermodal combines the convenience of truck with the economy of rail

Dedicated intermodal trains like this one, achieve much faster ramp-to-ramp schedules than traditional boxcar trains, because intermodal trains make few if any stops in transit.

In many lanes, intermodal service competes with single-driver highway truckload transit times.

Intermodal typically costs 15% to 40% less than highway truckload service. The longer the distance, the greater the savings.
How does a Shipment get on the Train?

To the shipper and receiver, intermodal looks like a highway truckload shipment… the truck and rail segments of the transit are managed into a “seamless move” by Market Transport, Ltd. and you receive just one invoice for the entire door-to-door transit.

Here an intermodal container is being lifted off the truck chassis at an intermodal ramp.

The container will be moved laterally by the overhead crane, and placed directly onto the stacktrain without being set on the ground… thus avoiding additional handling of the container.

Intermodal also services ocean terminals and port facilities, for import/export shipments of goods.
Intermodal trailers (left) have fixed chassis and wheels, and ride the train with their front “landing gear” firmly locked into the rail flatcar on which they ride.

Intermodal containers are removed from their chassis with wheels, before being put on the train. Below is the typical stacktrain configuration, with the bottom containers set down into the “well car”.

**TOFC = Trailer on FlatCar.**  
The unit initials stenciled on a trailer end in “Z”…such as REAZ123456.

**COFC = Container on FlatCar.**  
The unit initials on a container end in “U”… such as APLU123456.
A variety of **intermodal equipment** is available to meet the shipper's needs:
- 53’ high cube containers
- 48’ containers and trailers
- 45’ containers and trailers
- 20’ and 40’ containers in certain lanes

In many lanes, both **regular and premium services** are available:
- All intermodal service operates on published train schedules.
- Premium service is typically one day faster than regular intermodal service.
- Super-premium service using Amtrak passenger trains is available in some areas.

The Market Transport, Ltd. team works with shippers and receivers to create **customized and flexible intermodal services**:
- Equipment sizes
- Equipment pools
- Shipping and receiving schedules
- Pickup and delivery: By appointment or drop-and-pull
- Transit requirements

**Contact your Market Transport, Ltd. representative for your specific equipment and service needs.**
Major Intermodal Service Areas and Service Provides

110 North Marine Drive ~ Portland, OR  97217 ~ (503) 283-2405
www.markettransport.com
To Place an Order for Intermodal Shipment

Contact your Sales or Customer Service professional at Market Transport, Ltd. and provide the following information:

- Shipper’s address and phone number
- Pickup number or BOL number
- Receiver’s address and phone number
- Consignee’s PO number
- Preferred equipment size for the shipment
- Requested ship date (and appointment time, if applicable)
- Required delivery date (and whether an appointment is required to deliver)
- Service required at origin and destination: stay-with, driver-assist, or drop-and-pull
- Commodity being shipped
- Pieces and weight of the shipment

..and leave the rest to Market Transport, Ltd.
Intermodal: Perception vs. Reality

Perception:
- “Intermodal is just too complex – it’s more trouble than it’s worth.”

Reality:
- The intermodal specialists at Market Transport, Ltd. craft programs and service to meet your specific needs and requirements, and then manage all the details. You place one call and we do the rest.

Perception:
- “Intermodal costs less but the service is not dependable.”

Reality:
- Intermodal service runs on scheduled trains, usually 7 days a week.
- Thousands of time-sensitive shipments are carried by the railroads every day. In fact, UPS and the US Postal Service are major intermodal shippers.
- Premium service and guaranteed service are available in many intermodal lanes.
Perception:
- “What I might save with intermodal I lose with the additional inventory I have to carry because of longer transit time.”

Reality:
- In many lanes intermodal transit is only a day or two longer than truck.
- Unique services like Amtrak Roadrailer can match truck transit.
- For lower value freight like most consumer products and raw materials, intermodal savings more than offsets the cost of additional safety stock.

Perception:
- “I always know where my driver is. I never know where an intermodal load is.”

Reality:
- Market Transport, Ltd. can provide customized shipment tracing reports or EDI 214 shipment status transmissions that will give you current location and ETA – as often as you want, and to whomever needs to have the information.
For additional information call your Market Transport, Ltd. representative

Rate quotes and lane information
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