

# Freight Quotes

## 4 Steps to Success





## ACCURATE QUOTES ARE CRITICAL TO YOUR BOTTOM LINE. THESE STEPS CAN HELP YOU ENSURE PRECISION.

*Chances are it's happened to you before. You get your final shipping invoice, and it's loaded with extra charges that make the original quote look miniscule in comparison.*

No one likes an unwelcome surprise, particularly one that forces you to cough up extra money. And inaccurate quotes are a top cause of those surprises — even seemingly small omissions or mistakes can have big consequences.

Here are four steps you can take to help ensure accurate quotes.



### Step 1

## Know Your NMFC

Commodity classification or “class” is one of the main factors that affect shipment costs. The formula here is straightforward: Classify your shipment correctly, and you’ll get an accurate freight quote. Don’t do it right, and your freight may get delayed and you’ll get charged what are known as reclassification fees.

The key is to understand the NMFC code for your shipment. NMFC is shorthand for National Motor Freight Classification, a system that categorizes freight into 18 classes. **The classes cover the gamut of shipment types — from raw materials to finished products. And each gets assigned a number that ranges from 50 (the least expensive) to 500 (the most expensive). In turn, the number is based on four factors:**



### Density

Combined weight and dimensions of your freight

### Stowability

How well your freight can be arranged or stowed with the rest of the freight in the transport vehicle

### Handling Considerations

How difficult it'll be to load and unload your freight; such factors as size, fragility and packaging materials will all come into play here

### Liability/Value

A calculation of the chances that your freight will be damaged, damage other freight, or have a high replacement cost in the event of theft during shipment

Once you know your shipment's correct NMFC code and class, you can complete your quote request and fill out the bill of lading with confidence.



## Step 2 Use Correct Measurements

This is where precision pays off. If you accurately state the dimensions of your shipment when requesting a quote, you can determine the proper classification and service type for your freight and avoid reclassification fees.

On the flip side, inaccurately estimating your shipment's dimensions can cost you, particularly if you have oversized items, which may be subject to additional charges. **How can you determine the accurate dimensions of your freight? Always measure the full length and width of the pallet, as well as the shipment's height from the floor.**

Here's another point to note: LTL shipments typically consist of five or fewer standard, stackable pallet spaces and weigh less than 5,000 lbs. **If your shipment contains large pallets or oversized items, it's a good idea to get what's known as a volume LTL quote** — a rate the carrier quotes at the time of shipment and which is outside the normal LTL parameters. Doing so can help ensure you get the best deal, and also help you avoid additional charges.

## Step 3 Think Through Your Pickup and Delivery Locations

Freight pickups and deliveries to non-commercial areas or locations with limited or secured access often require an additional fee. While each carrier has slightly different guidelines, **these locations are considered limited access or non-commercial by most carriers:**



- » Camps, carnivals, fairs and amusement parks
- » Cemeteries
- » Churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and convents
- » Construction sites
- » Courthouses
- » Daycares
- » Golf courses and country clubs
- » Hotels, motels and retirement homes
- » Schools, colleges and universities without a dock
- » Medical and urgent-care sites without a dock
- » Military bases and installations
- » Mines, quarries and oil fields
- » Mini-storage units
- » Nuclear power plants
- » Parks, farms, ranches and Indian reservations
- » Prisons
- » Restaurants

Unsure if your location is subject to limited access fees? **A 3PL can help determine if the pickup or delivery location will incur additional charges** — and help you select the right service type for your freight.

#### Step 4

## Time It Right

**Transportation rates tend to fluctuate.** Why? Carriers make rate adjustments to factor in such variables as demand surges, fuel costs, available capacity and more. Given those ever-changing conditions, the quote you get today typically won't be valid two months from now. But if you wait until the absolute last minute, you might not be happy with the quote you get (or worse, you may find yourself calling around trying to find an available slot for your freight). **Rule of thumb: Most quotes are good for 30 days, so time your research with that figure in mind.**



**Boost your quote accuracy —  
and find a trusted partner to help  
solve your shipping challenges.**

All of these steps can make a big impact on the accuracy of your quotes. But there are numerous other factors that affect freight shipping charges. One way to get up to speed on them: Work with a 3PL that knows the freight industry.

And when the time's right to book a shipment, that same 3PL will also provide you with access to a full range of carriers that have the capacity and costs you need — all via a convenient single point of contact.

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