

Ask your logistics experts...

simple answers to your every day logistics questions

Q: Regarding shipping to India, when do I need an engineering certificate?

A: When exporting machinery or equipment to India, it is required to obtain a Chartered Engineers Certificate (CEC) which must be issued before the cargo ships. The usual process to obtain this certificate is:

1. Undertake a physical inspection of machinery and equipment for assessment of condition (before cargo is packaged) and recording of specific details on the machinery (year of manufacturing, markings, conditions, life expectancy for the machine, pictures of the cargo, etc.).
2. Assessment of reasonable value based on the information obtained.
3. Certificates are issued.

Not everyone can issue a certificate. Only a chartered engineer who is part of the India Institution of Engineers and has received the authorization to act as "Chartered Engineer" can issue a CEC.

This document is critical for shippers sending machinery to India as this will certify the value of the freight for customs duties and tax purposes. Failure to obtain this certificate before the shipment occurs would result on cargo getting stopped at the entry port, causing delays and additional costs. Needless to say, with India becoming a thriving industrial force, shipping machinery is not uncommon.

If you need help with transportation or arranging for CEC's on cargo to India, contact us at: Sales@allynintl.com.

Q: When shipping less than truckload (LTL) in the USA, what is the "freight class" and where do I find it?

A: LTL carriers determine the cost of transport by analyzing the weight, class and the total distance the cargo will travel. The class is related to the density, fragility, easy to handle and value of the cargo. The more valuable and fragile the cargo is, the greater the risk for the carrier if the cargo gets lost or damaged, hence the higher cost to ship it.

The National Motor Freight Transport Association (NMFTA) provides 18 freight classifications (National Motor Freight Classification, NMFC). While carriers are not required to establish rates according to these classes, most LTL carriers do utilize this as a major factor for shipment rates. The classes range from 50 to 500. The lower the class number, the less expensive it will be to move the goods. Be aware that sometimes you can negotiate the class.

For instance, there are situations where an item of “X” value becomes less valuable because what you are shipping is returned items and they may already be damaged. The freight class can make a dramatic difference on your transport cost. A simple example: 4 pallets of 48” x 48” x 48”, 500 Lb each, from zip 28208 to zip 48189. If the cargo class is 65, transport cost with carrier “W” would be \$251; if the same load was to move under class 150, the rate would be \$497; and at class 400, it would be \$1,230. Simply put, incorrect classes on your cargo could cost you a lot.

The easiest way to find your NMFC class is to ask a transport partner you trust (i.e. Allyn International), or you can purchase the full list from the NMFTA (nmfta.org). As a final note, the carriers have the right to re-class (just as they can re-weigh) cargo and you can always demand a copy of the certificate explaining the changes.

Allyn has 20 years of experience negotiating transport rates and managing cargo in the USA and worldwide. If you need any help with transportation rate negotiation or freight class identification, contact us at Sales@allynintl.com.