



→ North America Freight Market Insights

As freight markets continue to evolve, small- to medium-sized businesses must stay informed on the key trends shaping transportation across North America. Below are four critical insights from [C.H. Robinson's July 2026 Edge Report](#), along with recommended actions to help businesses navigate what's ahead.

- 1) **Truckload: Waiting until the last minute is becoming even more expensive.** Truckload rates continue to climb as carrier supply remains constrained, with transportation costs forecasted to increase more than 30% year over year. Carriers are becoming more selective about the freight they accept, making advance planning increasingly important for securing capacity and managing costs.
 - **Action:** Build extra lead time into upcoming shipments whenever possible. Even an additional day or two of planning can increase carrier options, improve coverage, and help reduce exposure to higher spot-market pricing.
 - **Updated Forecast:** [View the updated truckload rate forecast here](#), including quarterly outlooks for the remainder of 2026.
- 2) **Diesel prices are easing, but fuel markets remain unpredictable.** Diesel prices fell in June following a temporary ceasefire in the Middle East, providing some relief after months of increases. However, fuel costs remain significantly higher than a year ago, and ongoing geopolitical uncertainty means diesel prices could remain sensitive to future disruptions. Fuel costs are expected to remain an important factor in shipping costs through the summer.
 - **Action:** Take advantage of any short-term fuel relief to review transportation budgets and shipping plans, but be prepared for continued fuel-related cost fluctuations in the months ahead.
- 3) **LTL: Rising truckload costs are pushing more shipments into LTL networks.** As truckload rates continue to increase, more businesses are moving larger shipments through LTL carriers instead. Service remains stable, but growing shipment volumes could put pressure on capacity and pricing if this trend continues. Carriers remain focused on running efficient networks rather than lowering prices.
 - **Action:** Review your upcoming shipments and identify loads that can be planned earlier. Even a few extra days of lead time can help secure the service you need and reduce the risk of higher shipping costs as LTL volumes grow.
- 4) **Intermodal: Rising truckload costs are making rail a more attractive option.** As truckload costs continue to climb, more businesses are turning to intermodal to help manage transportation spend. Demand remains strong, and intermodal continues to offer a cost advantage across many lanes, though capacity is becoming tighter in some markets as more freight shifts to rail.
 - **Action:** Identify any longer-distance shipments with flexible delivery timelines and plan them further in advance. These shipments may be good candidates for intermodal, helping to lower transportation costs while maintaining reliable service.

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