



→ 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 five critical insights from [C.H. Robinson's October 2026 Edge Report](#), along with recommended actions to help businesses navigate what's ahead.

- 1) Truckload: Carriers are becoming more selective as capacity tightens.** Truckload capacity remains tighter than in recent years, and carriers are increasingly prioritizing consistent, predictable freight as costs remain elevated.
 - Action:** Share shipment forecasts and book freight as early as possible, especially for time-sensitive or recurring shipments. Providing advance visibility can help secure capacity and reduce exposure to spot-market rate increases.
- 2) Diesel: Fuel costs may stay higher for longer.** Diesel prices continue to rise due to refining and supply constraints, not just crude oil prices. As a result, fuel surcharges and freight costs may remain elevated even if energy markets begin to stabilize.
 - Action:** Factor higher fuel costs into shipping budgets and pricing decisions through the remainder of the year. Understanding how fuel surcharges affect your shipping costs can help you avoid unexpected expenses and plan more accurately.
- 3) LTL: Flexibility is becoming more important.** LTL capacity remains available, but carriers are becoming more selective as the market gradually strengthens. Shippers may find that the lowest-cost option isn't always the best fit, making planning and service selection more important.
 - Action:** Review shipment sizes, delivery requirements, and timing to ensure you're using the most efficient service level. Small adjustments can help reduce costs while maintaining reliable service.
- 4) Intermodal: It's no longer just about saving money.** Intermodal is becoming a strategic option for both cost savings and dependable long-haul capacity. As truckload capacity tightens, rail can provide greater flexibility and access to capacity for longer-distance freight.
 - Action:** Identify shipments with flexible delivery timelines, especially those moving 550 to 1,500 miles. Planning ahead can help secure capacity while taking advantage of potential cost savings compared to truckload.
- 5) Cross-Border: Preparation matters as much as capacity.** Cross-border capacity remains available, but driver availability, border requirements, and localized disruptions are making it more important to plan ahead. Even when trucks are available, documentation issues or border delays can impact transit times and costs.
 - Action:** Build extra lead time into cross-border shipments and ensure paperwork is complete and accurate before freight reaches the border. Early planning can help reduce delays and keep shipments moving smoothly.

→ BLOG

Beyond the Intermodal Moment: 5 Trends Shippers Should Watch This Holiday Season

 C.H. ROBINSON

2026-09-24 | Taylor Harrington | 4 Minute Read

Once viewed primarily as a cost-saving alternative, intermodal is increasingly becoming a long-term supply chain strategy.

Learn what's driving this shift and how shippers are using intermodal to move freight more efficiently, reduce costs, and build greater supply chain resilience.

[Read the blog](#)



C.H. ROBINSON

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