



Meat Import Council of America
www.micausa.org

Recommended Guidelines for Operational Consistency in Shipping Containerized Meat to the United States

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Preamble

Meat imports in the United States are subject to substantial regulatory oversight and require specialized services for moving and handling perishable, temperature-controlled food commodities. Import regulations include multiple documentation reviews, sampling, testing, and mandatory inspection at a limited number of designated facilities under the oversight of agencies including U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA FSIS), USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and more. In the context of regulatory requirements and supply chain capacity constraints, inconsistent and inadequate terms in ocean shipping contracts create outsized barriers to the free flow of containerized meat through the importation process on arrival. This can negatively impact all parties involved in the imported meat trade including importers, draymen, terminal operators, warehouses, customs brokers, steamship lines, and ultimately the consumers of imported meat, potentially creating an unsustainable operational system for the importation of meat.

These Guidelines are presented as recommended best practices and suggested terms for the international ocean shipment of containerized meat from all countries of origin to all destinations in the United States. These Guidelines are voluntary; individual parties may adopt or modify the terms as they see fit in their own shipping contracts with Steamship Lines (SSL's) or other counterparties in commercial agreements. Consistent, adequate, and predictable terms will benefit all parties involved in the trade by increasing efficiency, speeding container movements, and fostering the conditions for sustainable growth.

Suggested Shipping Terms

- Demurrage Terms* - defined here as available Free Time (before demurrage charges begin accruing) for containers after discharge at any terminal in North America
 - i. Standard four (4) free working days (not calendar days), to dray a container from a dock or terminal following complete vessel discharge. The first free day is defined as the first working day following complete vessel discharge prior to 24:00 hours local time.
 - ii. Free time on terminal at the discharge port should be comprehensive of all charges, except for the terminal handling charge. Examples of assessorial charges that should be avoided include, but are not limited to, container monitoring fees, container cleaning fees, terminal dwell fees, and on-port chassis rental fees.

- Detention Terms* - defined here as available Free Time (before detention charges begin accruing) for containers off terminal
 - i. Standard six (6) free working days (not calendar days) to return an empty container after the container interchange date.
 - ii. Empty container returns should be to the same location as the original container pickup interchange occurred.

- Chassis Terms
 - i. Chassis should be sourced at destination by the importer or their drayman, and not provided by the steamship line. There should be no charge for chassis from the steamship line.

- Genset Terms
 - i. Gensets should be sourced by the importer or their drayman upon arrival and not supplied by the shipping line. The shipper/exporter is not responsible to pre-pay for gensets.
 - ii. Genset availability should be guaranteed by the steamship line for chilled containers (-2 - 0 C), but will be charged to the importer only as used.

- Arrival Timing Changes
 - i. Where container arrivals are changed by greater than 3 working days compared to the estimated time of arrival (ETA) at time of lading at origin, free time will be extended by the number of days of the changed arrival.

** Detention and demurrage are terms defined by the U.S. Federal Maritime Commission but are being operationally applied to these guidelines as indicated.*