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Issue 89

THE SHIPPING STANDARD

OUR EXPERTISE YOUR ADVANTAGE

TARIFFS AND THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY: NAVIGATING A NEW ECONOMIC TERRAIN

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TARIFFS AND THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY: NAVIGATING A NEW ECONOMIC TERRAIN

The trucking industry finds itself at the intersection of trade policy and economic disruption, as the Trump Administration's sweeping tariff reforms reshape the cost structures and operational dynamics of freight transportation across the United States.

These tariffs are placing trucking companies in a difficult position. Imported truck parts and equipment – such as tires, brake systems, electronics, and cab interiors – are often sourced from countries facing high tariff rates, including China, Vietnam, Taiwan, and South Korea. With tariffs on these goods reaching up to 65%, companies are struggling to manage basic operating expenses and maintain their fleets.

Countries	Tariffs
China	60% + Regular Duty based on commodity
Vietnam	25% + Regular Duty based on commodity
Taiwan	25% + Regular Duty based on commodity
South Korea	25% + Regular Duty based on commodity

Smaller carriers, already operating on thin margins, are particularly vulnerable. Rising costs and customs-related delays and particularly a downturn of import volumes have led to longer downtimes and insufficient work for independent owner-operators.
For independent owner-operators who have had to bear the cost of maintaining their fleets are finding routine maintenance and upgrades as financially burdensome.

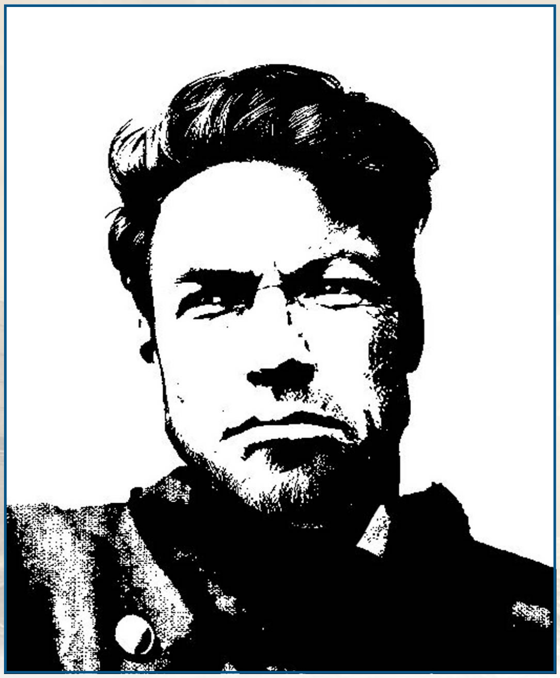
> *"The tariffs imposed by the Trump Administration have created cost pressures and logistical challenges, forcing the trucking industry to navigate a complex, tariff-driven landscape," said Anthony Fullbrook, President of OEC Group's North American Region. "This new environment is reshaping the industry, with some companies forming strategic partnerships with rail and warehousing providers to offer integrated services."*

Unfortunately, the financial strain doesn't end there. Increased scrutiny at ports and border checkpoints is causing longer wait times for trucks hauling international cargo. More frequent inspections and documentation reviews are delaying deliveries and disrupting schedules. For drivers, this means more time idling and less time earning—adding to frustrations in an industry already grappling with a labor shortage.

> *"As the market continues to evolve, trucking companies will need to be creative to adapt to this challenging economic climate," said Logan Cooper, Head of OEC Group's St. Louis Office. "Shippers may find unique opportunities in this environment, as trucking companies seek new business to offset rising costs. To fully capitalize, shippers should work with logistics experts who have deep industry relationships and know which carriers are open to making deals."*

Ask Ahab

This month our resident advice columnist answers questions about workforce shortages and whether or not the BNSF-CSX intermodal expansion is a reactionary move.



Dear Ahab:

I ship a lot of cargo from China to the U.S., what do you think will be the main issues I have to contend with in 2026?
– Peter Prepper

Dear Peter Prepper:

Just because there is a potential one-year détente between the U.S. and China, doesn't mean that there will be calm seas ahead. Therefore, I would expect trade tensions to remain high, with tariffs continuing to drive up costs and create uncertainty. Additionally, I expect cargo theft to continue to rise and for rates to experience volatile swings.

If that is not enough, expect cybersecurity threats to increase, and for government regulators, especially those in the European Union, to begin enforcing emissions regulations, which will add to the never-ending pile of compliance burdens. Finally, be prepared for an unexpected issue to wreak global havoc. So, buckle up – 2026 is going to be a wild ride!

Dear Ahab:

When will the Red Sea diversions end and what do I need to do in order to be prepared?

– ***Anxious Shipper***

Dear Anxious Shipper:

It remains unclear when the Red Sea route will fully reopen. However, when the diversions end and major carriers begin using the Red Sea route you can expect an immediate crush of cargo hitting European ports, as vessels travelling through the Suez Canal and around Africa will arrive at the ports at roughly the same time. This will create a significant amount of congestion, which will take months to fully clear.

Therefore, the best way to prepare is to continue to monitor the situation and have an alternative plan in place when carriers begin using the Red Sea route. I recommend booking earlier than usual to avoid congestion-related delays and ensure smoother delivery timelines.


IRINA, I THINK THE BEST THING TO DO IS TO TALK TO KAI. THAT IS THE ONLY WAY TO FIND OUT WHY HE LEFT YOU ON THAT SHIP.
YOU'RE RIGHT! I'LL GO SEE HIM NOW.
Santa's Workshop
BUT I AM IN NO MOOD TO TALK!
I LOVE WORKING HERE!
THE PEOPLE I INTERVIEW, STORIES I COVER. SO INTERESTING!
AND, IT'S GREAT FOR PROTECTING MY IDENTITY!
BOOM!
THERE YOU ARE!
HOW DARE YOU LEAVE ME TO DEAL WITH THE TARIFFS ALL BY MYSELF!
I CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING, BUT NOT HERE. I AM TRYING TO KEEP MY IDENTITY HIDDEN.
WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A CONVERSATION ... RIGHT NOW!
OKAY! OKAY! I HAVE AN IDEA!
ON THIS EPISODE OF PORT AND SWEET WE HAVE IRINA.
AND, IN A FUN CHANGE OF PACE, IRINA WILL BE ASKING ME THE QUESTIONS
BELIEVE ME, YOU HAVE A LOT TO ANSWER FOR!
Port and Sweet
OEC TV
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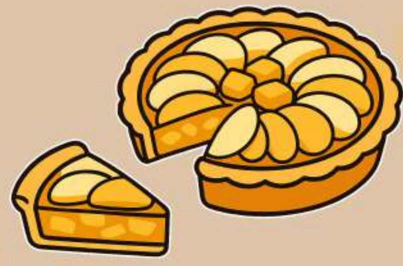
Fun Facts About
APPLE PIE



Apple pies were originally made without a top crust

The first apple pie recipe dates back to 14th Century England

Since it was her favorite dessert, Queen Elizabeth I would often serve apple pie at her royal banquets

Americans used to eat apple pie for breakfast during the 18th and 19th centuries

The largest apple pie ever made weighed over 18,000 pounds

Apple pie is the official state pie of Vermont

McDonald's began serving apple pie at its restaurants in 1968

A 2011 survey found that nearly half of all Americans say that Apple Pie is their favorite pie

OEC WORD SEARCH

ISSUE 89

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I	H	O	O	I	R	E	A	I	O	O	L	N	E	R	I	O	L	N	N	Y	I	P	E	I

Coordinator	Planner	Dispatcher	Driver
Supervisor	Operator	Scheduler	Analyst
Procurement	Compliance	Forecasting	Lead time
Inspector	Training	Metrics	Vendor
Audit	Timeline	Benchmark	

ABOUT OEC GROUP

As an industry pioneer, OEC Group has become one of the world's leading logistics companies. We leverage in-house expertise, carrier partnerships, connections with ports and transportation hubs, and our network of offices in North America, Europe, Asia, India, South America, Australia, and the Middle East, to provide freight transportation, logistics, information, customs and brokerage, insurance, and technical services to over 50,000 customers of various sizes and industries.

We are also highly sought after for the advice we give shippers on how to optimally manage their supply chains. The guidance we provide is based on data analytics, best practices, and decades of industry knowledge.

We believe that relationships matter and treat your cargo as our own. Our experts are always investing in efficient, cost-effective, and cutting-edge services to evolve with the ever-changing market, address the complexities of any client's supply chain, and consistently perform at the highest level for our customers.

Our business is making our logistics expertise, your competitive advantage.