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What is Intermodal Drayage & Cross-Docking

In the world of shipping and logistics, intermodal drayage and cross-docking are common terms used to describe the specific way that freight is being transported. With both systems, the use of a warehouse management system is key to being effective and successful.

What is Intermodal Drayage?

In the world of shipping and logistics, intermodal drayage is an all-encompassing term. Traditionally intermodal services include a combination of ocean/shipping, truck and rail.

Why are Warehouse Management Systems important?

With real time WMS, intermodal companies can reduce the handling of cargo, improve security, allow for faster transportation and more control, and finally reduce damage and loss.

What is Cross-Docking?

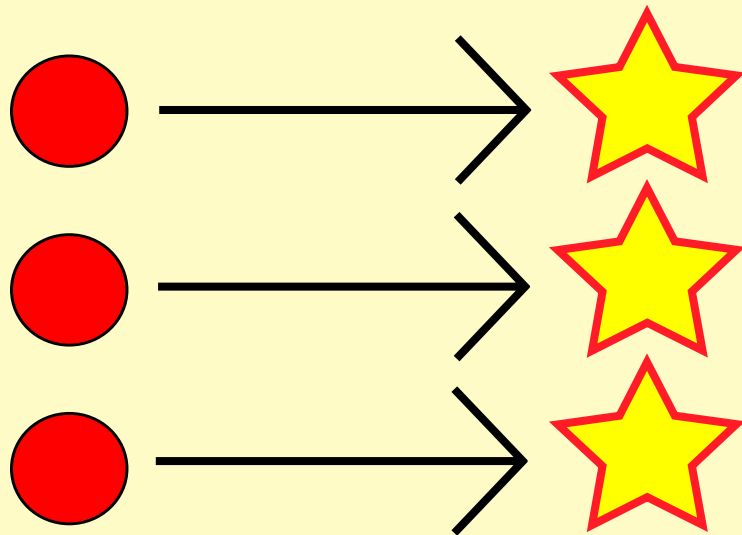
Cross-Docking is a type of freight movement system that promotes a flowing, seamless supply chain. Like intermodal drayage, materials can be received from truck, rail or ocean containers.

Intermodal: using more than one mode of transportation when moving a container or cargo.

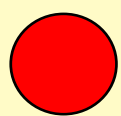
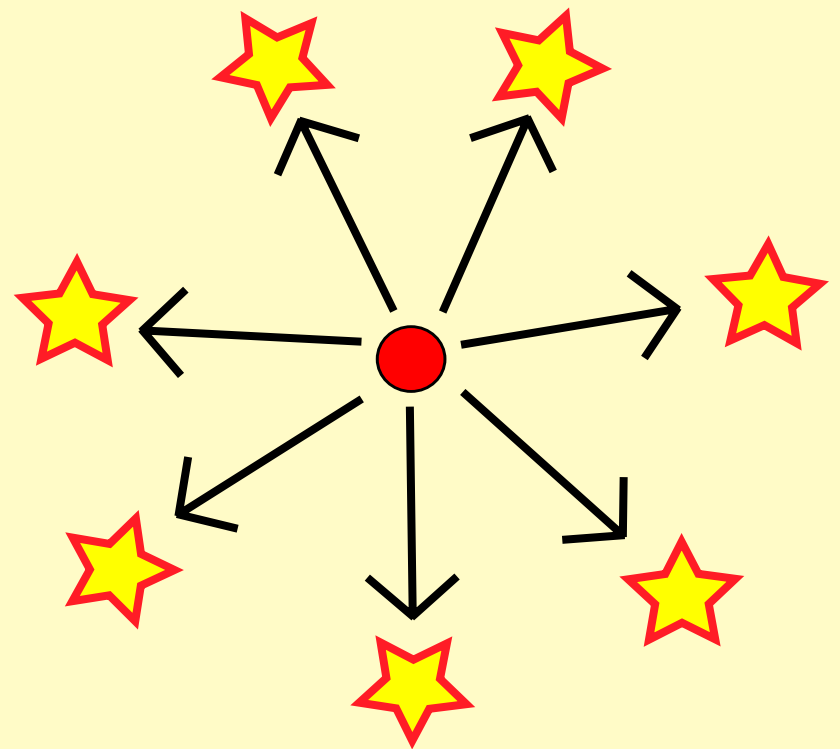
Drayage: goods transported a short distance, usually as a small part of a longer and more complex supply chain system.

Intermodal and Cross-Docking

Intermodal



Cross-Docking



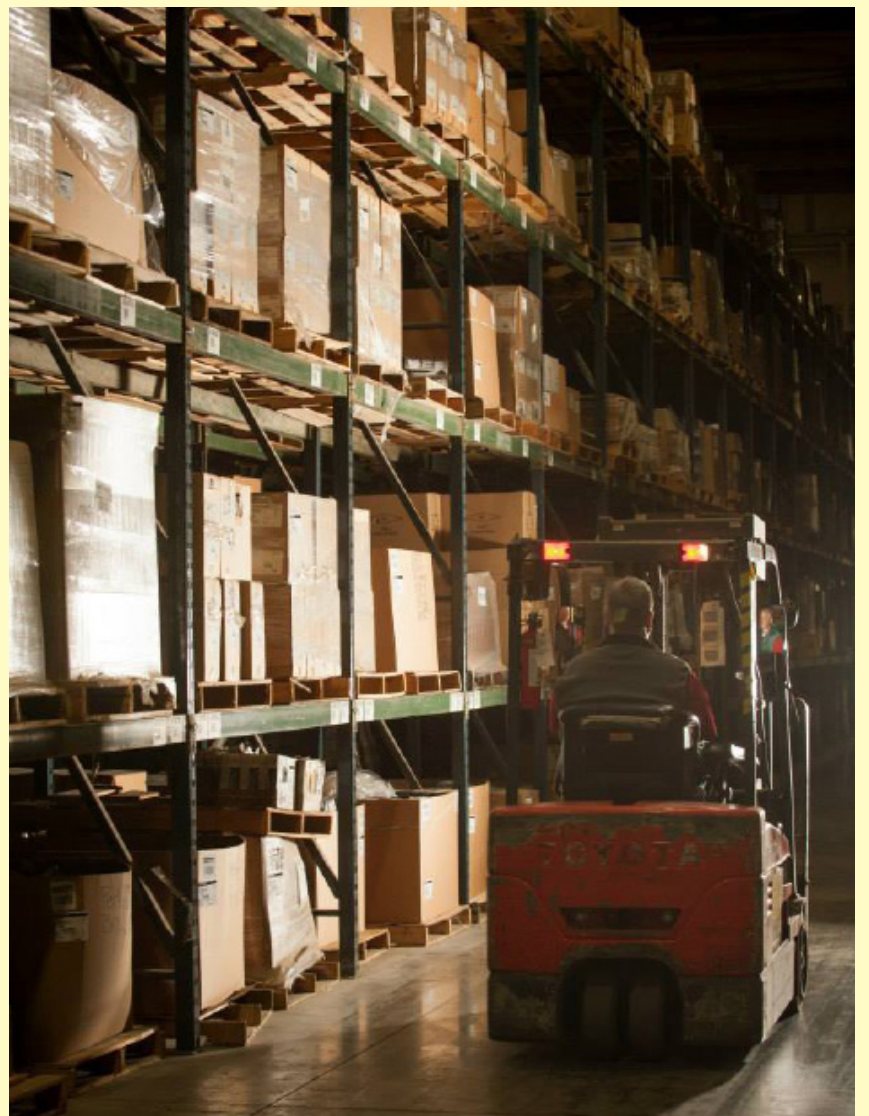
INBOUND PORT



FINAL DESTINATION

In the infographic above, you can see the point-to-point system that intermodal drayage follows. With the cross-docking solution, you can see that the receiving port ships directly to its several end points at once.

Use Cross-Docking Instead of Drayage When:



- Shipping materials that do not need handling at a warehouse
- Shipping materials that do not need to be stored or repackaged
- Shipping materials to similar end points near each other
- Shipping materials that are time-sensitive or perishable
- Shipping materials on a recurring delivery
- Shipping materials that can be screened quickly through automated systems and sent automatically, without needing a surplus inventory



Scenarios Where Cross-Docking Solutions #Win Big

- A customer must pay round-trip to get an empty container back to the port. This means a customer 300 miles away is having to pay for 600 miles of freight. By cross-docking, this customer would only pay for the 300 miles plus a minimal charge for local drayage and cross-docking.
- For customers with a high volume of containers, consolidate loads and decrease the number of over the road moves. For example, 5 container moves can be consolidated to 3 large vans, eliminating the cost of two "over the road" moves.

- The coming announcement of a large box store distribution center, which adds an additional 600 daily container moves, means that the available full truckload (FTL or cross-docking solutions) in the area will never be as tight as drayage capacity.
- When transloading rather than draying, the customer's product can be unloaded in a warehouse and shipped directly to the end user. This practice eliminates a complete leg of the journey and saves the shipper/customer a sizeable amount money.

By transloading (cross-docking) the container, a customer can have the container removed and returned to the port by the last free day (4 days after unloaded from ship). The product can be staged and held in a warehouse until they are ready to receive the product. The customer can avoid the demurrage charges at the port, which can be as high as \$150-\$200 per day.

Choose the Right Cross-Docking Solutions Company

Cross-Docking can save cost and time, but it's important to ensure that you're using a carrier that can handle your specific intermodal demands.

Transport carriers must have a large enough fleet for the cross-dock to run smoothly

Cross-Docking solutions should offer a cost-effective solution compared to long haul drayage

A computerized and automatically updated warehouse management system must be used to transmit real-time information to its users



Six Additional Ways to Lower Drayage

1
Is your
carrier
GREAT?

Companies have tried to save on drayage and found the savings resulted in less service and care! Be certain you are using a company who manages your freight in a way that benefits you and keeps the supply chain running smoothly.

↓
2
Is your
freight
delivered in
its **PERFECT**
STATE?

If you find yourself in a situation where you're losing large amounts of money on compromised shipments due to poor handling, it may be time to find a new supply chain management company or start outsourcing. Best in class companies have client satisfaction guarantees and strive to transport and manage inventory with extreme care.

↓
3
Put your
material in
a **CRATE!**

The packaging chosen for shipping matters a great deal! Palletized and crated materials are cheaper to move than pad-wrapped or mixed freight. Ensure that you're shipping material in the safest but most cost-effective ways.

Six Additional Ways to Lower Drayage

4

Mind your
WEIGHT!

Sometimes, packaging and material weight can be manipulated to save costs. To reduce the weight of freight, consider what materials are being used in manufacturing and packaging.

5

Don't be
LATE!

There are often fees associated with missing a delivery. Use a supply chain company that is prompt and meets deadlines every time.

6

Know your
RATE!

Sadly, it's no secret that companies have been accused of overcharging for drayage services. Be discerning and watch invoices and freight slips to ensure you're receiving accurate charges for labor and freight.

Overall, there's likely no "perfect supply chain management company" just one that is perfect for you. Choose wisely and the impact can be great. When selecting a carrier, consider cost, location and proximity, specific services provided, use of a best-in-class warehouse management system, fleet size and capability, and any other details that may play a role in your specific circumstance. While some companies are still using intermodal docking systems, many companies are switching to cross-docking. In most cases, transloading (cross-docking) is proving to be highly time and cost effective. Speak to your carrier about ways to reduce cost within your intermodal system.

About The Author:

With humble beginnings, back in 1958, BR Williams has grown into an award-winning supply chain management company servicing all 48 contiguous states and Canada.

With facilities in Anniston (2), Oxford, Piedmont, Eastaboga, Mobile and Tallahassee, FL, BR Williams supports over 2550 customers across the Distribution, Logistics & Transportation divisions.

Industries served: automotive, defense, home improvement, education, food raw materials, textiles, chemical, industrial packaging, metals (finished goods), highway safety and more.



To discuss your Distribution, Logistics or Transportation Service options, including Intermodal Drayage, please contact Matt Nelson at matt.nelson@brwilliams.com or (800)-523-7963.

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