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Newsletter

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CBP: Shippers could lose import privileges if customs information is inaccurate

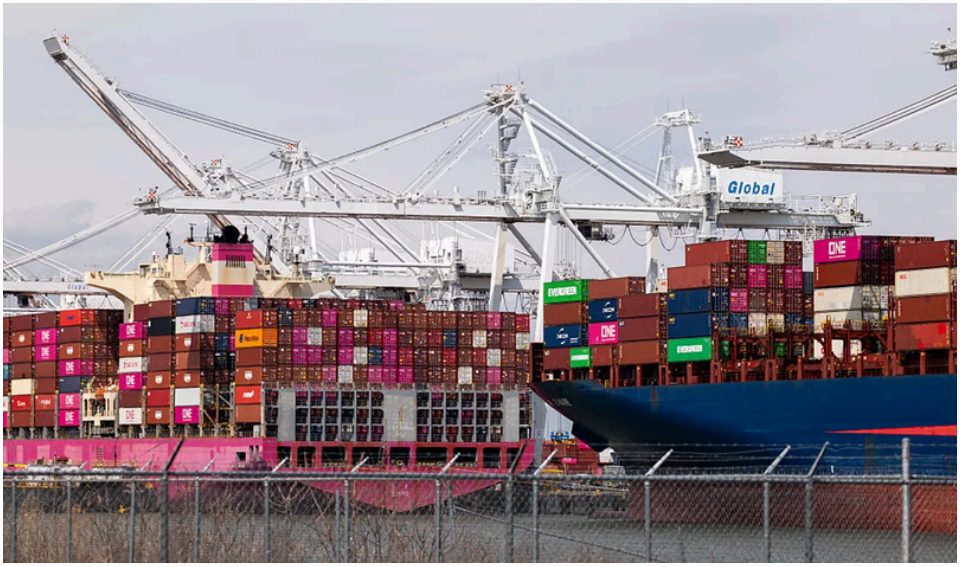


Beginning September 18, 2026, U.S. Customs and Border Protection will introduce stricter enforcement measures for importers of record. Companies that provide inaccurate information on customs forms may have their Importer of Record (IOR) number immediately voided, preventing them from importing goods into the United States. The requirement applies to all importers of record, even when the information is submitted on their behalf by a customs broker.

CBP is conducting a comprehensive review of importer records, focusing on details such as telephone numbers, email addresses and physical addresses. Importers remain responsible for ensuring that their information is accurate and kept up to date after the initial submission. Companies found in violation will be notified in writing and provided with instructions on how to restore their importer status.

The measure is part of a broader effort to strengthen customs enforcement, including increased oversight of foreign importers and higher penalties for non-compliance. CBP is also exploring the use of traceability technology and additional export documentation to improve supply chain visibility. Shippers and freight forwarders should review importer records carefully, coordinate closely with customs brokers and keep all supporting information current to reduce the risk of penalties or shipment disruptions.

Ocean freight rates cool despite continued price elevation



As the peak shipping season enters its final weeks, ocean freight rates are beginning to decline. Freightos expects no further major increases on Transpacific trade lanes, although strong demand from May through July has kept prices above normal levels. Congestion at several Asian ports is also continuing to affect market conditions.

A series of typhoons since mid-July has disrupted port operations across the region. Typhoon Saudel temporarily closed Ningbo for 78 hours, while Shanghai reported around 42 vessels at berth and 99 vessels waiting at anchorage. Disruptions also reached Busan and were expected to affect Shenzhen.

The storms prevented ports from clearing existing backlogs, leading some ocean carriers to skip calls at congested locations. This increased transshipment volumes and placed additional pressure on nearby ports. Although freight rates are easing, shippers and freight forwarders should continue monitoring weather conditions, port congestion and potential schedule changes across major Asian trade routes.

Air cargo rates ease, shippers buy short-term capacity



Global air cargo spot rates continued to soften in August, averaging $3.13 per kilogram, according to Xeneta. Rates remained 24% higher than a year earlier, but annual growth slowed for the third consecutive month after reaching 41% in May. Rates also declined 3% from July.

Shippers are increasingly purchasing short-term capacity while waiting to see whether prices fall further. However, demand grew 6% year over year and continued to outpace available supply. Together with rising jet fuel costs, this is keeping the market favorable to carriers and limiting the speed of further rate reductions.

Market conditions also varied by trade lane. AI-related shipments kept rates from Northeast and Southeast Asia to North America 36% and 34% above late-February levels. In contrast, additional belly capacity on passenger flights pushed Europe-to-North America rates 25% below late-February levels, although they rose slightly in August.

FedEx launches Shopify app to combat surprise import charges

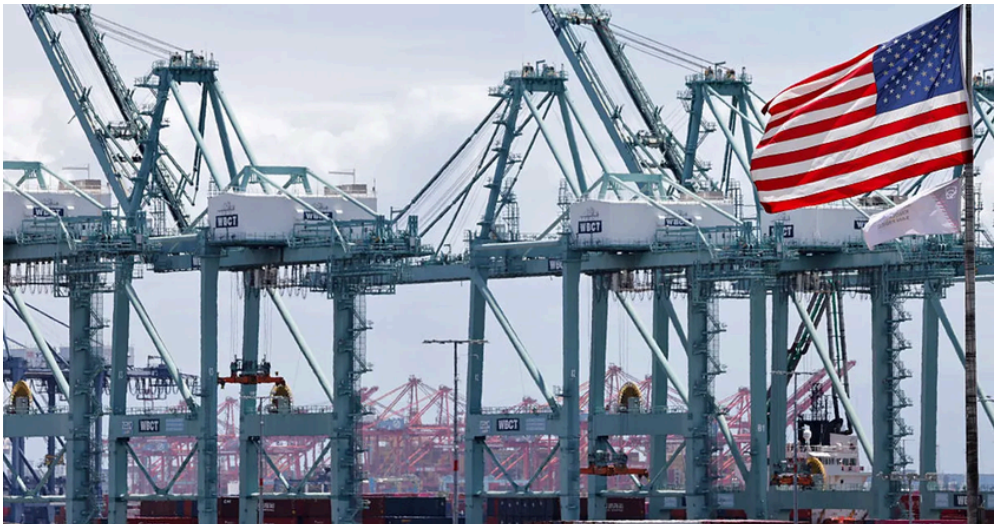


FedEx has launched FedEx Duty and Tax, a Shopify app that allows merchants to display guaranteed duties and taxes to customers during checkout. Available for $99 per month, the app covers any difference if the actual import charges exceed the amount shown. However, customers will not receive a refund if the final charges are lower, and the displayed amount includes a service fee.

The app forms part of FedEx's new Global Trade Navigator, a collection of digital tools designed to support international shipping before, during and after delivery. Its features include identifying Harmonized System codes, estimating duties and taxes, recommending customs documents and reviewing product details such as customs value and country of manufacture. Businesses can also integrate trade and compliance information into their workflows through FedEx APIs.

The launch comes as changing tariffs and customs regulations make cross-border costs increasingly difficult to predict. A FedEx survey found that 68% of small and midsize businesses have customers who are sometimes surprised by additional charges upon delivery. By improving cost transparency and simplifying customs preparation, FedEx aims to make international shipping easier for businesses of different sizes.

No industry is spared from costly US tariff regime



Tariff payments by U.S. companies have declined from their 2025 peak but remain historically high, according to the JPMorganChase Institute. Its customs duty payment index rose from a baseline of 100 in October 2024 to 314 one year later. After falling to 201 in May 2026, it increased again to 222 in June.

Every industry has faced a higher tariff burden since April 2025. Apparel manufacturing recorded the highest burden, rising from approximately 3.3% to 5.2%, followed by leather and allied product manufacturing, which increased from approximately 2.7% to 4.7%. Electrical equipment, appliance and component manufacturing also saw a significant increase, from approximately 1.0% to 4.0%. U.S. government tariff revenue remained elevated at $23.7 billion in June.

Midsize companies are particularly exposed because they generally have less purchasing power, tighter margins and fewer financial resources than large corporations. Many appear to be delaying major supply chain changes while waiting for greater clarity on future trade policies.



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