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→ 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 four key insights from C.H. Robinson's November 2026 Edge Report, along with recommended actions to help businesses navigate what's ahead.

1) **Truckload: Less capacity means disruptions can have a bigger impact.** Truckload conditions are relatively stable overall, but with fewer available trucks and drivers, regional demand surges, weather, and holiday shipping can push rates higher and limit availability more quickly. Pressure is expected to build around Thanksgiving and into December.
    - **Action:** Build flexibility into year-end shipping plans. Book shipments early rather than waiting until the last minute and consider adjusting pickup dates or routes if capacity becomes tight. Even a day or two of flexibility can give you more options when holiday demand increases.

2) **Diesel: High fuel costs are likely to extend into 2027.** Diesel prices remain high as supply stays limited. Even if crude oil prices come down, diesel and freight costs may not follow as quickly.
    - **Action:** Plan for higher fuel costs when building your 2027 shipping budget. Review the fuel surcharges on your shipments so you can better estimate your total shipping costs.

3) **LTL: Extra services could have a bigger impact on your shipping costs.** The LTL market remains stable, but carriers are increasingly raising prices on shipments that require additional handling or services. Shipments that are oversized or require liftgates, inside delivery, redelivery, or storage could see larger increases.
    - **Action:** Look beyond the base rate when comparing LTL options. Confirm shipment details and any extra services upfront and compare the total expected cost to avoid unexpected charges.

4) **Intermodal: Growing demand makes early planning more important.** More shippers are turning to intermodal as truckload costs rise, increasing demand for rail capacity. While intermodal can still offer meaningful savings compared with truckload, some markets are seeing tighter capacity, higher prices, and longer transit times.
    - **Action**: Identify shipments that can move by rail and plan ahead, especially during peak shipping periods. Allow extra transit time and compare the total cost with truckload to determine where intermodal offers the best value.

Pro Tip: Receive the latest freight market updates directly via email or in your LinkedIn feed. Sign up today!



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Get more from your LTL shipments

LTL can be a cost-effective option for smaller shipments, but details like freight classification, dimensions, delivery requirements, and extra services can affect what you pay. Learn ways to manage costs, improve reliability, and ship more efficiency with LTL.

Read the blog

C.H. ROBINSON