
Instructions for Completing the Commodity Flow Survey

NOTE: Some instructions are included on the questionnaire itself. However, due to space limitations, most of the instructions and definitions are included in separate reference materials. These include this instruction guide, and a listing of commodity codes to be used for classifying individual shipments in this survey.

Part I – GENERAL INFORMATION

Purpose of the Survey

The Commodity Flow Survey (CFS) will produce statistics on the movement of commodities and the types of transportation used. It will describe the relationships among shipment characteristics such as weight, value, mileage, type of commodity, and the type of transportation used. The results of this survey will provide a basis for in-depth analyses of policy issues that impact the transportation systems of the United States.

For the Commodity Flow Survey, we are asking you to use all of your basic documents such as sales invoices, bills of lading, shipping logs, etc., to provide the data needed regarding outbound movement of all commodities: date, value, weight, commodity description, hazardous material designation, mode of transport, whether containerized or not, and destination. For exports, we also ask the export mode of transportation, city and country of destination, and the port of exit. You are asked to provide the data only for a **sample** of your outbound shipments. Samples are used because they give valid results while reducing the time and cost involved in completing the questionnaire.

Your Report is Confidential

By law (Title 13 U.S. Code), the information you provide the Bureau of the Census is **strictly confidential**. Only sworn Census employees will have access to the reports or information obtained from your records. The data you provide will be used solely for statistical purposes and will be published only in summary form that **does not reveal** the operations of an individual company.

Part II – GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION FOR COMPLETING YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE

Steps in Completing the Survey

1. Fill in the information requested on the front page regarding the name, operational status, physical location of your establishment, and origin of shipments.
2. Gather your files and documents for all shipments/deliveries initiated **during the 2-week period specified on the front page of the questionnaire**.
3. Indicate the main source document used in Item E on page 2 of the questionnaire.
4. Following the Sample Selection Instructions on pages 2 and 3 of the questionnaire, select a sample of your total shipments for the 2-week period.

5. In Item F of the questionnaire, complete one line for each **sampled** shipment/delivery. Use the reference materials provided when completing columns f (commodity code), i (domestic modes of transportation), l (destination), and n (export mode).
6. Complete the contact, date, and signature information requested in Item G on page 6 of the questionnaire.
7. Return the completed questionnaire in the envelope by the due date printed on the front of the questionnaire. If you need additional time to complete your questionnaire, please call the 800 number listed below.
8. Please call 1-800-528-3049 if you have questions or require assistance.
9. If we should have questions regarding your report, a Census Bureau employee may call to ask for clarification. For this reason, we suggest that you retain copies of the documents for the sampled shipments separately from your other shipment documents. You may also find it useful to retain a copy of your completed questionnaire for your own records.

What We Mean by a “Shipment”

A “shipment” (or “delivery”) is an individual movement of commodities **from** your establishment **to** one customer OR **to** another location of your company (including a warehouse, distribution center, retail or wholesale outlet). A shipment uses one or more modes of transportation, including parcel delivery, U.S. Postal Service, courier, private truck, for-hire truck, rail, water, pipeline, air, and other modes.

Please note that for this survey:

A full or partial truckload can be considered **one** shipment **only** if all the commodities are destined for one buyer/receiver at one location. If the truck makes multiple deliveries on a route, **each stop is considered (at least) one shipment**.

We realize that there may not be a one-to-one relationship between your shipments and the main document you use as a reference for this survey (e.g., sales invoice, bill of lading). For example, for some cases there may be more than one shipment per invoice or more than one invoice per shipment. If this is the case for your establishment, please remember to sample actual shipments, and not just documents.

What We Mean By “Commodities”

“Commodities” refers to items that your establishment produces, sells, or distributes, **not** to items that are considered as excess or by-products of your establishment’s operation.

PLEASE INCLUDE FORM NAME AND NUMBER IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE.

For example, refuse, scrap paper, and returnable containers are not considered as "commodities", unless your establishment is specifically in the business of selling or otherwise providing scrap, waste, or recyclable materials to others.

Origin of Shipments – Item D

IF THIS ESTABLISHMENT ORIGINATES SHIPMENTS FROM OTHER PHYSICAL LOCATIONS, your completion of Item D is critical in determining which shipments to include and exclude prior to selecting your sample of shipments. Your responses here will also affect the entries you make in column (k) - "Origin Code" - of Item F. Please follow the instructions in this item carefully. The "CFN" is the 11- digit number following the letters "CFN" on the mailing label. If there is not enough space to enter all of your shipment origins in Item D, please call 1-800-528-3049 for assistance.

IF ALL OF YOUR SHIPMENTS ORIGINATE FROM THE MAILING ADDRESS ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE LABEL OR THE ACTUAL PHYSICAL ADDRESS REPORTED IN ITEM C, then all of your shipments should be subjected to sampling. Also, when completing Item F, you should enter "A" in column (k) - "Origin Code" - for all shipments.

Part III – INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING ITEM F

Complete one line for each selected shipment. Column definitions are provided below.

SHIPMENT NUMBER (column b) - Enter the invoice number, shipment number, or some other unique identification number that could be used by your establishment to find this particular shipping document if questions arise regarding your report.

DATE SHIPPED (column c) - Enter the month and day of the shipment. If shipment date is not available, use the invoice/shipping document date. Use numbers only. (e.g., use "03" for March)

TOTAL VALUE (column d) - Enter the dollar value, in whole dollars, of the entire shipment. The reported value should not include freight charges and excise taxes (**i.e., report the net selling value, f.o.b. plant**). If the value is not directly available from your records, **please estimate**.

TOTAL WEIGHT (column e) - Enter the weight of the total shipment **in whole pounds**. If weight is not available from your records, please estimate.

COMMODITY CODE (column f) - Please use the **list of Commodity Codes in the enclosed Commodity Coding Manual** to select the proper code. For shipments with more than one commodity, enter only the

code for the commodity with the greatest weight in the total shipment.

COMMODITY DESCRIPTION (column g) - Enter a full description of the commodity shipped. For shipments with more than one commodity, describe only the commodity with the greatest weight in the total shipment. Do not use trade names, catalog numbers, or other codes not familiar to persons outside your business.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SHIPMENT (column h) - Indicate whether or not the shipment **REQUIRED PLACARDING** for hazardous materials by entering "**Y or N**" (yes or no).

DOMESTIC MODE(S) OF TRANSPORT (column i) - Enter the code(s) for **all** modes of transport used for the shipment to its **domestic** destination (i.e., the destination reported in column l). For export shipments, this means list only the mode(s) of transport used to reach the port, airport, or border crossing. Codes are located at the bottom of pages 2,3,4 and 5 of the questionnaire. Enter all that apply, based on the definitions below:

- **Parcel Delivery/Courier/U.S. Postal Service** - Delivery services that carry letters, parcels, packages, and other small shipments that typically weigh less than 100 pounds. Includes bus parcel delivery service.
- **Private Truck** - Trucks operated by a temporary or permanent employee of this establishment or the buyer/receiver of the shipment.
- **For-hire Truck** - Trucks that carry freight for a fee collected from the shipper, recipient of the shipment, or an arranger of the transportation.
- **Railroad** - Any common carrier or private railroad.
- **Inland Water and/or Great Lakes** - Barges, ships, or ferries operating primarily on rivers and canals; in harbors, the Great Lakes, the Saint Lawrence Seaway; the Intracoastal Waterway, the Inside Passage to Alaska, major bays and inlets; or in the ocean close to the shoreline.
- **Deep Sea Water** - Barges, ships, or ferries operating primarily in the open ocean. Shipping on the Great Lakes and the Saint Lawrence Seaway is classified with inland water.
- **Pipeline** - Movements of oil, petroleum, gas, slurry, etc. through pipelines that extend to other establishments or locations beyond the shipper's establishment. Aqueducts for the movement of water are not included.
- **Air** - Movements using commercial or private aircraft, and all air service for shipments that typically weigh more than 100 pounds. Includes air freight and air express.
- **Other Mode** - Any mode not listed above.

- **Unknown** - The shipment **was not** carried by a parcel delivery/courier/U.S. Postal service, and you cannot determine what mode of transportation is used.

Note: Commodities that are "shipped" under their own power, such as boats, barges, ferries, ships, aircraft, trucks, and trains **should be classified with the appropriate mode above**. Commodities shipped under their own power for which an appropriate mode is not listed (e.g., buses, recreational vehicles) should be listed as "other" mode.

CONTAINERIZED (column j) - Indicate whether or not the shipment was containerized by entering "**Y or N**" (yes or no). "Containerized" means that the shipment **left your establishment** in an intermodal container or stackable tank without permanently attached wheels. These containers typically vary from 20 to 53 feet in length, and are carried on truck chassis, trains, and ships.

ORIGIN CODE (column k) - Enter the code letter (A,B,C or D) for the location from which the shipment originated (**unless** this establishment initiates/originates shipments from other locations, the origin code will always be "A"). Refer to Item D on the front of the questionnaire and the "Origin of Shipments" section on page 3 of these instructions.

DOMESTIC DESTINATION: CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE (column l) - For domestic shipments, enter the city, state and 5-digit zip code of the buyer/receiver as it appears on the shipping document. Use the "**ship to**" address. Use the two letter state abbreviation shown in Part IV below. For **export shipments**, report the U.S. **port of exit** as the destination city. The port of exit is the port or airport from which the shipment left the country. In the case of land shipments into Mexico or Canada, it is the border crossing.

EXPORT SHIPMENT (column m) - Indicate whether or not the shipment is intended for export outside of the United States, by entering a "**Y or N**" (yes or no). For purposes of this survey, shipments to Puerto Rico and U.S. territories and possessions are considered **exports**.

EXPORT MODE (column n) - If the shipment is an export, enter the code for the mode of transport by which the shipment left the country. Codes are located at the bottom of pages 2,3,4, and 5 of the questionnaire.

FOREIGN DESTINATION (column o) - If the shipment is an export, enter the foreign **city and country of destination**. Be sure that the city reported for these shipments in the "Domestic Destination" column (l) is the U.S. port of exit.

Part IV – STATE ABBREVIATION LIST

Enter the State abbreviation as shown below in column (l) of the shipment sample form:

State	Abbrev.	State	Abbrev.
Alabama	AL	Montana	MT
Alaska	AK	Nebraska	NE
Arizona	AZ	Nevada	NV
Arkansas	AR	New Hampshire	NH
California	CA	New Jersey	NJ
Colorado	CO	New Mexico	NM
Connecticut	CT	New York	NY
Delaware	DE	North Carolina	NC
Dist. of Col.	DC	North Dakota	ND
Florida	FL	Ohio	OH
Georgia	GA	Oklahoma	OK
Hawaii	HI	Oregon	OR
Idaho	ID	Pennsylvania	PA
Illinois	IL	Rhode Island	RI
Indiana	IN	South Carolina	SC
Iowa	IA	South Dakota	SD
Kansas	KS	Tennessee	TN
Kentucky	KY	Texas	TX
Louisiana	LA	Utah	UT
Maine	ME	Vermont	VT
Maryland	MD	Virginia	VA
Massachusetts	MA	Washington	WA
Michigan	MI	West Virginia	WV
Minnesota	MN	Wisconsin	WI
Mississippi	MS	Wyoming	WY
Missouri	MO		

NOTICE - Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to vary from 1.75 to 9 hours per response, with an average of 2.4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Associate Director of Management Services, Attn: Paperwork Reduction Project 0607-0753, Room 2027, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233-0001; and to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Attn: Paperwork Reduction Project 0607-0753, Washington, DC 20503.

PLEASE INCLUDE FORM NAME AND NUMBER IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE.