



FCL LCL CY CFS CY/CFS CFS/CY CY/CY DEFINITIONS

The respective meaning of the terms FCL, LCL, CY and CFS is as follows:

1. FCL – full container load or full carload
2. LCL – less than container load, loose container load, less than carload or loose carload
3. CY – container yard
4. CFS – container freight station
5. FCL versus LCL

The word carload relates to the rail car. The FCL and LCL are differentiated, in practice, on whether the ‘whole container’ or ‘not the whole container’ is intended for the consignee.

The FCL means the load reaches its allowable maximum (or full) weight or measurement. In practice, however, the FCL in the ocean freight does not always mean packing a container to its full payload or full capacity. For example, an exporter books a 20’ container that is intended for a consignee at the FCL flat rate of US\$1,500. If the consignment occupies 500 cu. ft. and weighs 5,000 kg. only, the case is still FCL and the exporter has to pay US\$1,500.

If an exporter intends to pack a container to the full capacity or full payload with the consignments of two or more consignees for the same destination, the case is LCL and the carrier will charge the LCL freight rate on each consignment. In the LCL arrangement, the shipper is required to deliver the cargo to the carrier’s container freight station for containerization, thus there is no guarantee that the two or more consignments from the same exporter will share the same container. In some cases, the exporter is allowed to pack the container at their premises in the LCL arrangement, and then the carrier uses that same container to pack in more cargo from other shipper(s) to make a full container load at the container freight station.

Case Sample: If the importer maintains the order at 1,500 cartons and no forwarder is involved, and if the high cube container service is not available, it may mean that there will be one 40' FCL plus 135 cartons LCL. A combination of FCL and LCL in a consignment, which is a typical aftermath from the cargo overflow, is a poor exporting and importing practice, taking into account the additional freight and other charges in both countries. All 1,500 cartons can be shipped by LCL, but the freight cost can be higher and the cargo may be exposed to a higher risk of damage and loss.

CY versus CFS

The CY and CFS apply to the manner and the location of the cargo delivery and receipt in a container service. The CY is the delivery (or receipt) of a whole container from (or at) the shipper's or the forwarder's (or the consignee's) cargo yard or premises. The CFS is the delivery (or receipt) of loose cargo from (or at) the carrier's container freight station.

The container freight station (CFS) is operated by the carrier for the receipt, forwarding, and assembling or disassembling of cargo. Normally, the container freight station is a customs clearance center. The CFS service may be necessary under any of the following circumstances:

- The kind of cargo and quantity of order does not warrant the use of the whole container.
- The shipper's or the consignee's premises are inaccessible by container due to poor road conditions (e.g., narrow road) and location (e.g., remote area not served by container).
- The overall load of vehicle exceeds the legal limitation.
- The shipper or the consignee lacks the necessary container loading or unloading equipment.

Modes of CY and CFS Container Services

CY/CY Container Service

The CY/CY (read as 'CY to CY') container service—door-to-door container service or house-to-house container service—broadly means that the whole container received by the carrier is packed at the shipper's or the forwarder's premises, and the delivery of that same whole container to the consignee's premises.

In a related term, door-to-door service—which is often used in the cargo forwarding and may involve the LCL—refers to a type of freight service available from a forwarder whereby the cargo is picked up at the consignor’s premises and delivered to the consignee’s premises.

CY/CFS Container Service

The CY/CFS (read as ‘CY to CFS’) container service—door-to-port container service—broadly means that the whole container received by the carrier is packed at the shipper’s or the forwarder’s premises, and that same whole container is emptied at the carrier’s container freight station at the port of destination. The consignee arranges the delivery of the loose cargo from the container freight station to his/her premises.

CFS/CY Container Service

The CFS/CY (read as ‘CFS to CY’) container service—port-to-door container service—broadly means that the delivery of the loose cargo to the carrier’s container freight station at the port of origin is packed into the whole container, and the delivery of that same whole container to the consignee’s premises.

CFS/CFS Container Service

The CFS/CFS (read as ‘CFS to CFS’) container service—port-to-port container service or pier-to-pier container service—broadly means that the delivery of the loose cargo to the carrier’s container freight station at the port of origin is packed into the whole container, and that same whole container is emptied at the carrier’s container freight station at the port of destination. The consignee arranges the delivery of the loose cargo from the container freight station to his/her premises.

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