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WORLDWIDE

GLOBAL VIEW

Notes



Shipping Odd-Sized and Oversized Cargo Overseas

By Michelle Bruno

It's hard to imagine how some equipment—odd sized and oversized—makes it from one end of the globe to the other. After all, there is only so much that manufacturers can do to reduce the size of the shipment's components without causing headaches in assembly on the other end. In the context of exhibitions, there is a limited amount of time for installation of the exhibits so that breaking them down into too many component parts only complicates the set-up.

It's a trade show organizer's dream to contract exhibitors that bring in large equipment to an international show—big equipment equals more exhibit space equals more revenue. On the other hand, show producers in industrial show segments such as mining, construction, agriculture, manufacturing technology, oil and gas, and other large equipment markets know that it's a nightmare when the equipment doesn't show up. There's nothing worse than a large booth with nothing in it but crickets.

Understanding what it requires—equipment, personnel, and expertise—to move the (nearly)

unmovable across continents and oceans to make it to the show on time, helps organizers and exhibitors make better decisions about contractors, what to ship, and how to ship. Here are some important considerations.

On the surface

Shipping by surface freight—truck and rail (to Canada or Mexico) may be the most restrictive mode of transport. Oversized cargo normally travels on a flatbed truck trailers.

The approximate length of the trailer is 48-53 feet. The width is 96 inches. The deck of the trailer (there are variations: flatbed, single drop step deck and double drop step deck) ranges from 42-48 inches in height to 28-40 feet in well length.



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IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

1. Truck shipments that exceed 96 inches in width require permits, special handling, and loading expertise. The height in most states is limited to 13'6" (trailer plus load) and the loaded weight cannot exceed 80,000 pounds.
2. Permit requirements, regulations, and height/weight limitations may change once the shipment crosses the border into Canada or Mexico.
3. Rail shipments are not recommended for exhibition transportation except under certain conditions, such as the lead time is long enough to accommodate rail (slow in comparison to other alternatives) or other modes of transport are unavailable.

In the air

It is possible to ship large equipment via airfreight, however, it requires special aircraft or a charter (the entire airplane is contracted). One of the aircraft types that can accommodate large, heavy equipment is the Antonov. Although there are several different models currently in use, the Antonov, in general, has some unusual characteristics that make it ideal for shipping large, heavy equipment: the payload it can handle is approximately 330,000 pounds. The nose of the aircraft lifts up, the aircraft kneels down, and some models are equipped with their own internal cranes.



According to Wikipedia, the heaviest single cargo item (weighing in at 416,900 pounds) ever sent via airfreight was loaded onto an Antonov-225 aircraft. The piece, a generator bound for Armenia, was 53.2 ft. long and 14.0 ft. wide.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

1. Shipping oversized cargo via air is very expensive due to the limited number of aircraft that can

accommodate extremely oversized cargo commercially and the expense to operate such aircraft.

2. Shippers must also consider the overland transport from the airport to the exhibition center. Permits and special handling are often required.

On the water

Shipping odd-sized and oversized cargo via ocean is the most common mode of transport when time permits. Specially designed vessels such as "Roll On/Roll Off" (RO-RO) are most appropriate for large vehicles (mining and construction equipment, for example) that can drive on and off the vessel. There is a broader selection of vessels and transport routes via ocean freight than via airfreight. The costs are much lower and the number of limitations is much fewer via ocean than via air.



IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

1. Some machinery may be too sensitive to ship via ocean freight; the constant rocking motion can be detrimental to equipment or the moisture and salt from seawater (were it to penetrate the packing material) could do damage.
2. The lead-time required for ocean freight shipments (compared to air or surface) could be prohibitive for exhibition purposes.
3. As with airfreight, exhibitors and shippers must plan ahead for the forwarding of the shipment from the port to the exhibition site.

International freight forwarders that specialize in exhibitions and have considerable experience moving large and heavy equipment are critical to the success of the organizer, exhibitor, and the show where these types of shipments are possible. Consulting with the forwarder in advance to discuss the options, costs, and special considerations is time well spent.

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