

Differences in Reporting Container TEU Counts

Container TEU (20-foot equivalent unit) counts for U.S. West Coast Ports are compiled and published by several organizations. These sources include the individual ports, PMA, and PIERS®, the Port Import-Export Reporting Service of *The Journal of Commerce*.

These TEU counts differ because each set of data is collected using criteria unique to the collecting organization. Each data set is subject to careful verification and audit, and the resulting databases have proven to be very consistent.

Port Authorities

The number of TEUs reported by the ports are uniformly higher than the numbers reported by PMA and PIERS.

Container counts are generally collected by the ports as the basis for determining revenue due for the use of port facilities. From a port's perspective, the resources used for moving a container and the real estate occupied by a container is the same whether the container is full or empty and regardless of where it came from or where it is going. Therefore, a port counts *all* container moves.

Pacific Maritime Association

Cargo tonnage and container TEU counts are required to be reported to PMA to determine assessments and to calculate membership voting strength. The cargo and man-hour assessments are necessary to pay for collectively bargained fringe benefits and Association expenses. The cargo assessments provide that portion of monies not paid for by the man-hour assessments.

The figures published by PMA include all of the TEUs reported moving through the ports except empty containers, containers discharged and reloaded with contents unchanged, certain transshipped containers, and containers reported as exempt.

Additionally, the PMA figures do not include containerized automobiles and trucks that the shipper has chosen to report as *Automobiles & Trucks*. For tonnage reporting and assessment purposes, the carrier has the option of reporting such cargo either as *Automobiles & Trucks* or as *Containers*. For 1994, there were 85,000 TEUs of containerized autos reported to PMA that were not being included in its TEU count.

PIERS®

The smallest number of TEUs is generally reported by PIERS. The PIERS data are derived directly from ship import/export manifests and contain details on up to 5 million U.S. import and export categories. The TEU count part of the database includes only containers which contain imported or exported cargo.

Container TEU data collected by the ports and by PMA include, in addition to containers in international commerce, containers being moved to and from Alaska and Hawaii, intercoastal containers, and discharged coastwise containers.

The table below shows the total 1994 container figures in the six major West Coast ports as released by the ports themselves, by PMA, and by PIERS. Also shown is a list of types of containers included in each set of data.

Both the PIERS and individual port

TEU numbers show Long Beach ending 1994 with slightly more TEU moves for the year than Los Angeles. PMA data, on the other hand, show Los Angeles holding on to the top position by a narrow margin. The difference between the PMA and the PIERS data is, in part, attributable to the containers moving between Los Angeles and Hawaii which are not included in the PIERS data.

Also, Oakland and Seattle reverse positions when comparing the PMA and PIERS data. Again, a greater number of containers moved through Oakland between the mainland and Hawaii may account for the larger number of Oakland TEUs.

The 1994 TEU figure reported by the Port of Tacoma is more than double that reported by PIERS. Much of this difference can be accounted for by the large number of containers being moved between Alaskan ports and Tacoma.

1994 TEU Counts in the Six Major West Coast Ports as Reported by the Port Authorities, PMA, and PIERS

Port Authority	Port	as a % of		as a % of	
		PMA	Port Auth.	PIERS	Port Auth.
Long Beach	2,573,827	1,991,087	77.4%	1,934,662	75.2%
Los Angeles	2,518,618	2,063,783	81.9	1,788,976	71.0
Oakland	1,491,044	1,081,042	72.5	878,786	58.9
Portland	317,961	241,238	75.9	233,434	73.4
Tacoma	1,027,928	710,308	69.1	509,448	49.6
Seattle	1,311,374	1,026,318	78.3	966,298	73.7
Total Major Ports	9,240,752	7,113,776	77.0	6,311,604	68.3

Where They Get Their Numbers

Includes:	Port		
	Authorities	PMA	PIERS
Empty containers	•		
Transshipped containers (contents unchanged)	•		•
Transshipped containers (contents changed)	•	•	•
Containerized autos and trucks (domestic)*	•		
Containerized autos and trucks (import-export)*	•		•
Coastwise containers (loaded)	•		
Coastwise containers (discharged)	•	•	
Containers to and from Alaska	•	•	
Containers to and from Hawaii	•	•	
Containers in international commerce	•	•	•

*PMA gives carriers the option of reporting containerized autos and trucks either as *Automobiles & Trucks* or as *Containerized Cargo*.