



BOL breakdown: a line by line guide

introduction

If one thing is for certain, it's that freight shipping often comes with a heavy load of paperwork. From purchase orders, to packing slips and payment receipts, it can seem like that mountain of documents is never ending. One of the most important documents any shipper should familiarize themselves with is the Bill of Lading (BOL). This important piece of paper performs many functions during the shipping process, and understanding how each and every line can present potential obstacles for your safe delivery is super important.



Partner Ship
Your Shipping Connection

CUSTOMER SERVICE: 1-800-599-2902
WEB SITE: PartnerShip.com

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

DATE _____

SHIP FROM

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____

SHIP TO

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____

THIRD PARTY FREIGHT CHARGES BILL TO:

PartnerShip LLC
500 E Lorain St
Oberlin, OH 44074

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Bill of Lading Number: PS -

Shipper PO#: _____

Shipper REF#: _____

CARRIER NAME: _____

Trailer number: _____

Seal number(s): _____

SCAC: _____

Pro number: _____

BAR CODE SPACE

Freight Charge Terms: *(freight charges are prepaid unless marked otherwise)*

Prepaid ☐ Collect ☐ 3rd Party ☐

CARRIER INFORMATION

[illegible]

Where the rate is dependent on value, shippers are required to state specifically in writing the agreed or declared value of the property as follows:

"The agreed or declared value of the property is specifically stated by the shipper to be not exceeding _____ per _____."

COD Amount: \$ _____ Collect: ☐ Prepaid: ☐

Fee Terms: Collect: ☐ Prepaid: ☐

Customer check acceptable: ☐

NOTE Liability Limitation for loss or damage in this shipment may be applicable. See 49 U.S.C. • 14706(c)(1)(A) and (B).

RECEIVED, subject to individually determined rates or contracts that have been agreed upon in writing between the carrier and shipper, if applicable, otherwise to the rates, classifications and rules that have been established by the carrier and are available to the shipper, on request, and to all applicable state and federal regulations.

The carrier shall not make delivery of this shipment without payment of freight and all other lawful charges.

Shipper Signature

SHIPPER SIGNATURE / DATE

This is to certify that the above named materials are properly classified,
packaged, marked and labeled, and are in proper condition for
transportation in accordance with the applicable regulations of the DOT.

Trailer Loaded: Freight Counted:☐ By Shipper☐ By Driver☐ By Shipper☐ By Driver/pallets said to contain☐ By Driver/Pieces

CARRIER SIGNATURE / PICKUP DATE

Carrier acknowledges receipt of packages and required placards. Carrier certifies emergency response information was made available and/or carrier has the DOT emergency response guidebook or equivalent documentation in the vehicle.

emergency response guidebook or equivalent documentation in the
 1. *1. The information above is received in good order, except as noted*

Property described above is valued at \$100,000.

1. a legal document serving as evidence between the shipper and carrier
2. a receipt of freight services and goods
3. a document of title, or ownership, of goods

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The BOL not only gives direction on the location of pickup and delivery, but it also defines payment terms, gives necessary details about the shipment, and outlines special instructions for additional services requested. Without these important items being filled in correctly, a carrier may have issues fulfilling these requests appropriately - causing your shipment to be detained and its delivery to be missed.

The BOL is also important in the unfortunate event that your shipment may go missing or is damaged in transit, as it is required in order to file a claim with the carrier for compensation. With a missing or incorrectly filled out BOL, you're sure to have some issues getting through to the carrier and receiving reimbursements. In order to make sure you are filling out your form correctly, you must understand each and every part of the document in its entirety, so you can avoid costly mistakes.



why are the location information and date important?

It goes without saying that having the correct information listed for the pickup and delivery addresses is critical in making sure your shipment goes smoothly from the start. Usually, the pickup address is given either online or over the phone when scheduling with the carrier. So, it's a good safeguard to assume that the person doing the scheduling may be a warehouse worker, part-time team member, or possibly someone else less familiar with complete details about the pickup. The BOL may be used as a reference guide by that individual during scheduling, which is why it's important that even the pickup information is listed correctly, legibly, and that the document itself is easy to locate. Incorrect information can lead to misrouted trucks or specialized service requests being overlooked. Both of these add up to missed pickups which mean your shipment is going to be delayed from the start.



BILL OF LADING

CUSTOMER SERVICE: 1-800-599-2902

WEB SITE: PartnerShip.com

SHIP FROM

Name: Business ABC

Address: 1234 East Street

City/State/Zip: New York, NY 12345

SHIP TO

Name: Business XYZ

Address: 5678 West Street

City/State/Zip: Los Angeles, CA 98765

Sample BOL

BOL breakdown: a line by line guide

The accuracy of the ship-to information on the BOL is even more critical, because it gives specific direction to the carrier on where to take the shipment. Just as with the pickup information, if the delivery information is incorrect, delays and missed deliveries can occur. If an appointment for delivery is needed, and the carrier attempts to unload at the location, fees can occur for missed appointments and additional attempts at re-delivery.

You want to be sure to note the actual day of pickup as the date on the BOL, not the date the pickup is scheduled. It's important because it could be used as a reference to track freight or manage billing invoices. If a pickup is missed, it's probably smart to print a new BOL with the correct date listed at the top, just to keep things straight.



why is bill-to information important?

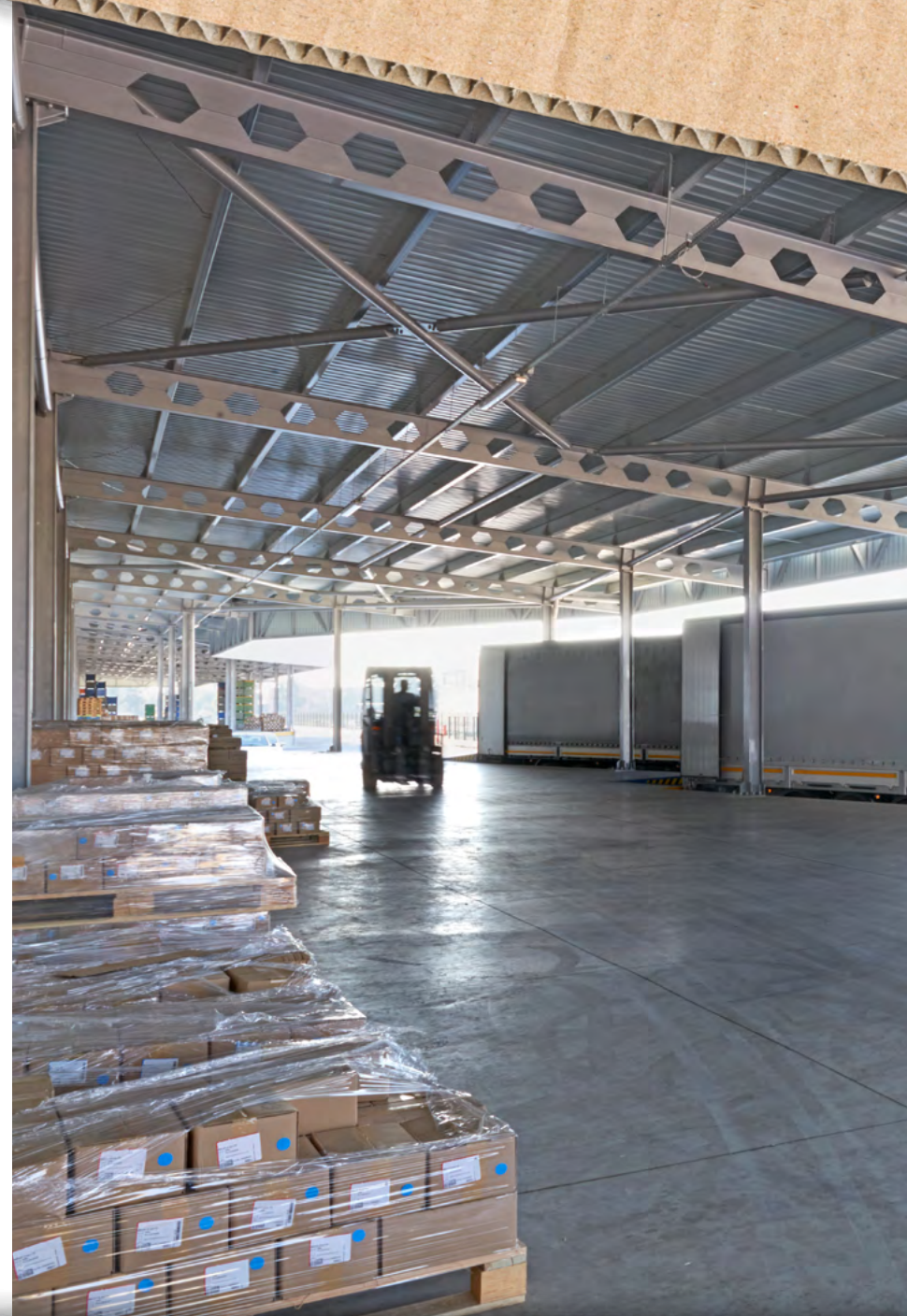
Being mindful of correctly filling out the bill-to information is a central part of the BOL. The bill-to lists who will be invoiced for the freight charges. In the case of a third-party provider, it's imperative that this is noted, otherwise they will not be notified. For example, if you use PartnerShip for your freight shipping, you must list PartnerShip as the bill-to to ensure your shipment is billed correctly and reflects any discounted pricing you may be entitled to. Otherwise, you run the risk of being billed directly by the carrier, most likely at full price.

THIRD PARTY FREIGHT CHARGES BILL TO:
PartnerShip 500 East Lorain Street Oberlin, OH 44074
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
CARRIER INFORMATION

Sample BOL

why are the special instructions important?

If your delivery location needs any sort of special service requests, such as lift gates, an appointment for delivery, a specifically-sized truck, or anything out of the ordinary, it's important to list these things in the special instructions section. Since these requests need to be mentioned at the time of scheduling the pickup or noted online, it's crucial that you know what you need for successful transit. The special instructions section is also a good place to list contact information for the individuals who will be managing the shipping procedures – a correct name and number with extension is key. If there are any other specifics about carrier handling you may want to mention, such as fragility, it would also be smart to note it in the instructions section as well.



what are the different types of reference numbers?

- **Bill of Lading number** - a BOL number is specific to the generated BOL and used for a specific load or shipment. It is a reference number that helps tie the shipment to a tracking system. The BOL number is the most commonly referenced number, and can be used for billing, accounting, claims, and many other areas in addition to a PRO number.
- **Shipper PO number** - also known as a purchase order number, is used to specifically identify an order request sent from a buyer to a seller, rather than to help track a shipment. It's not uncommon for sellers to ship orders prior to payment, so it is necessary on many shipping documents. It also serves as a sort of "double check" to identify an order that may be pulled and ready to pick up, so that the carrier can measure against the BOL and confirm proper amount, commodity type, etc.

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- **Shipper reference number** – very similar to a PO number, a reference number can be given in order to release the freight to the carrier for the pickup. It may be a combination of PO number, shipper's name, customer number, BOL number, or another unique identifier, and specifically helps identify the owner of the cargo.
- **Carrier name/trailer number** – this specifically refers to what carrier is scheduled to pick up your freight, and if a particular truck is being used, this can be noted as well for further identification. Using this properly may help deter theft or mistaken freight, as it confirms the correct driver is picking up the correct shipment if there are multiple available loads at the pick-up facility.
- **SCAC/PRO number** – developed by the National Motor Freight Traffic Association in the 1960s, SCAC stands for Standard Carrier Alpha Code and helps to identify road transport companies. PRO number, short for progressive number, is one of the most commonly used identifiers in freight transport. It's implemented by carriers to organize and track the progress of the shipment. Any shipper who would like to know the status of their freight, either by calling in or tracking online, will need to know their PRO number. The code is also commonly used in other departments such as billing and invoicing, claims management, and many others.



Freight Payment Terms



Prepaid - indicates that the shipper, or consignor is responsible for billing charges.



Collect - indicates that the receiver or consignee, is responsible for billing charges.



Third Party - indicates when a party other than a shipper or receiver on the BOL is paying the freight charges, such as using a 3PL like PartnerShip.

how are freight charge terms indicated on a BOL?

Freight charge terms are detailed in a breakdown that is made clear on the BOL and is important in making sure the proper party is responsible for paying for the shipping charges. As the BOL may stand in as a legal document, it's important that this is filled out clearly and accurately and that you understand the differences in the terms.

If you are using a 3PL, it is crucial that the name and address are noted on the BOL accurately before pickup, or that you are using a document provided to you by the broker, so that the correct party is billed. This ensures the invoice is routed to the appropriate party and proper rates will be in place.

what sort of shipment information is on a BOL?

One of the most significant portions on the Bill of Lading is the section dedicated to the shipment information. This is where shippers need to be as specific as possible when noting details about the load and using supplementary information like PO numbers. The primary pieces of information needed for a BOL about the shipment include:

- **Weight** – total weight of the entire shipment in pounds
- **Pallet** – pallet or skid count, or, package/item count
- **Hazmat** – whether the shipment contains hazardous materials, which require specific citation and have special rules and requirements for shipping
- **Commodity** – a brief description of the items being shipped
- **NMFC** – National Motor Freight Code, specific to the commodity, density, and a variety of other factors
- **Class** – classification of the shipment; dependent on the NMFC



Factors Determining Freight Class



Density - the space an item takes up as it relates to weight.



Storage - how easily freight can be stored and stacked on a truck.



Handling - how easily freight can be loaded and unloaded on the truck.



Liability - determined by a shipment's perceived risk, such as high value or fragile products.

Making an estimate or intentionally trying to alter the information regarding the details of the shipment will most likely result in some challenges with your final bill. Though your price is quoted based on the details provided, the final cost of your freight shipping will depend on your shipment information being correct. Keep in mind, if a carrier feels that the information provided is off, your BOL will be reviewed and the shipment flagged for inspection. An inspection means extra fees, in addition to the load being potentially more expensive due to its determined actual class, weight, commodity, etc. The key takeaway here? Don't fake facts on the BOL.

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what part do the signatures and confirmations play on the BOL?

Near the bottom of the Bill of Lading, there is a required section that outlines responsibility for damage, payment for claims, and the part the carrier plays in loading and unloading of the freight. Because the BOL serves as a legal document, signatures and dates are required from both the shipper and from the carrier at the time of the pickup. There are boxes checked as well, indicating who loaded the freight as well as who counted the pieces of freight.

These details are in place to document liability in the event of damage or loss and makes clear responsibility for those incidences. Shippers should always take the time to fully read the document beforehand so that they are familiar with the terms, as well as verify all of the details that are noted.





in conclusion

The Bill of Lading is a crucial piece of shipping paperwork that needs to be prepared completely and accurately. Every single piece of the document, from the addresses to the special instructions, play a critical part during the process of the shipment. It's important to remember that the BOL not only serves as a receipt of goods and services, but also as a document of ownership and a legal contract between the shipper and carrier. Incorrect information on a BOL can cause delays, transit and delivery issues, invoicing errors, and claims concerns. But, PartnerShip® has you covered. Our freight specialists help prepare your BOL accurately so you don't encounter paperwork challenges that can complicate your shipment. Contact us today to ship smarter.

Visit PartnerShip.com/ContactUs

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