

## TERMINAL

- Utilize existing tools to streamline communication, access information faster, and reduce potential delays
- As a BCO, gain access to terminal websites for more efficient handling of exception management issues
- Communicate proactively on special requests and priority cargo
- Utilize afternoon appointments when possible
- Terminal appointment rules can be found [here](#)
- For hot loads or requests like peel piles, send information to the terminal well in advance

## RAIL

- Provide visibility on priority (hot) containers during peak volume periods. *Best Practice: consider sending a weekly list of hot IPI containers to stakeholders (MTOs, port, etc.) to address or prevent rail service issues*
- Maintain communication with railroads during peak shipping periods. *Best Practice: high-volume BCOs may consider weekly calls with railroads to provide volume updates, check departure status, and discuss potential service issues*
- Share volume forecasts when possible. *Best Practice: if shipping IPI, providing forecasts can help minimize delays during peak periods*

## CUSTOMS EXAM STATIONS (CES)

- Understand and follow the process for handling customs exams
- File documentation in a timely manner
- Take steps to minimize being targeted for an exam
  - *No pallets or excess wood packaging*
  - *No mistakes on entries*
  - *Be accurate on product descriptions*
  - *Review BOL/manifest consistency*
  - *Be mindful of garment fabric mix*
  - *Know your customers. Avoid representing port shoppers*

## DRAY MANAGEMENT

- Maximize drayage efficiency – Check if the shipper made empties available to a dual transaction
- Is there an alternate receiving option if terminal is not receiving empties for a specific carrier?
- **Trucker Vetting** – Ensure your dray provider is a fit for your service requirements
- Utilize **Peel Piles** when Possible - For lower volume shippers, consider using a drayage operator that can offer their own trucker peel pile

## PEEL PILES: Turn Times & Dray Productivity

- Understand minimum volumes required by each terminal. Found [here](#)
- Peel pile requests – Ensure notice is given to the terminal at least 48 hours prior to vessel ETA
- Commit to picking up your loads within the agreed time frame. Otherwise, process does not work
- Try to utilize afternoon appointments as much as possible, which typically have shorter truck queues and turn times
- Frequent communication and coordination with the terminal on drayage plan for peel pile loads
- For high volume shippers, if not meeting/phoning once per week, at least email the marine terminal of upcoming volume and plan (peel pile, RTG) for mutual planning
- For lower volume shippers, consider using a drayage operator that can offer their own trucker peel pile

## CONTACT

Steve Balaski  
Director, Business Development  
253-888-4403 | [sbalaski@nwseaportalliance.com](mailto:sbalaski@nwseaportalliance.com)

# Checklist for Importers

## OCEAN CARRIER

- Confirm ocean carrier is receiving empties at the terminal or at an off-dock location.** (Especially important for weekend or night gates).
- Trucker is assigned to the container in Marine Terminal Operator (MTO) system.** *Best Practice: send this to the terminal at least two business days in advance of vessel arrival, especially if using a peel pile.*
- Ocean Carrier has cleared all fees.** *Best Practice: ensure close coordination with the ocean carrier on clearing and paying fees to avoid delays in cargo availability. These charges may be separate from fees due to the marine terminal.*

## TRUCKER

- Peel pile request made at least two business days in advance** of vessel arrival with truckers assigned to each container. *Best Practice: establish a common SCAC if utilizing multiple dray providers for the same peel pile.*
- Cargo is cleared and all fees are paid.** *Best Practice: Cargo may show as unavailable in the system due to its local AND/OR fees being due. Please check. If container is in an available location, by paying outstanding fees container can be picked up immediately.*

## TERMINAL

- Empty container is “on-hired” in the marine terminal operator’s system.** This is required for the terminal to accept the empty and prevent delay in the transaction. This is generally only applicable when an ocean carrier shifts vessel calls to a different terminal.
- Empty container has been “pre-arrived” or an appointment is made in the terminal system (if applicable for the terminal).** (Container information has been submitted electronically to the terminal in advance of the container arrival.)
- Schedule appointment for import pick up.** *Best Practice: some terminals are accepting exemption requests for same day, advance appointments, etc. Please contact terminal directly if an exemption is needed.*
- Fee payment.** *Best Practice: consider establishing an online account directly with the terminal to facilitate faster payment.*
- Advise terminal of any hot cargo at least two business days in advance** of vessel arrival to try preventing it from going into closed area, advising it will be picked up immediately.
- Understand Appointment Rules.** *Best Practice: Get familiar with each terminal’s appointment rules, which can be found on their own website, or on the NWSA website [here](#).*

## CONTACT

Steve Balaski  
Director, Business Development  
253-888-4403 | [sbalaski@nwseaportalliance.com](mailto:sbalaski@nwseaportalliance.com)