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Ocean shipment booking request transactions

The Ocean Shipment Booking Request, also known as a Reservation Request, is an electronic transaction used to initiate the process of securing transportation space with an ocean carrier, freight forwarder, or inter-modal provider. It serves as the digital equivalent of a booking form, allowing shippers and their logistics partners to request vessel or transport space for upcoming shipments. This transaction belongs to the ANSI ASC X12 EDI standard and is widely implemented across the maritime and intermodal logistics industry, particularly for containerized freight operations.

The ocean shipment booking request is created and sent by shippers, freight forwarders, or third-party logistics providers (3PLs) to request space for their cargo. It is received by carriers or inter-modal providers such as ocean shipping lines, Non-Vessel Operating Common Carriers (NVOCCs), or rail operators who evaluate capacity and availability to confirm or modify the booking request.

This transaction communicates all necessary details for scheduling and space allocation, including information about origin and destination, shipping routes, equipment types and quantities, cargo descriptions, preferred sailing dates, and handling requirements. In essence, it acts as a formal digital request for transportation capacity, ensuring that carriers have the data they need to plan

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resources, allocate containers, and provide an appropriate booking response.

The ocean shipment booking request is a key enabler in streamlining the freight booking process and improving supply chain visibility. By digitizing and automating booking requests, it eliminates reliance on manual communication methods such as emails and spreadsheets, reducing the risk of errors and accelerating processing times. This leads to faster booking confirmations, greater data accuracy, and more efficient capacity planning for both shippers and carriers, while providing stakeholders with real-time visibility into booking status and transport schedules. Additionally, the ocean shipment booking request seamlessly integrates with modern digital shipping platforms and aligns with industry standards set by the Digital Container Shipping Association (DCSA)

The ocean shipment booking request is transmitted at the start of the booking process, before a shipment is scheduled or dispatched. Shippers or logistics service providers use it once they have determined the shipment’s destination, time line, and transportation mode but before any cargo movement occurs. For example, a shipper or 3PL sends a Booking Request to a carrier or freight forwarder, specifying the desired routing, ports, container type, and shipment details. The carrier reviews this information to check availability, vessel schedule alignment, and special handling requirements. The carrier then issues a ocean shipment booking confirmation to acknowledge the request and indicate acceptance, modification, or rejection. This structured exchange ensures that both parties operate on a clear, confirmed plan before the shipment process begins.

The ocean shipment booking request is the first step in the digital freight booking process. It allows shippers and logistics providers to efficiently reserve transportation space while ensuring that all stakeholders share the same structured, accurate information. By digitizing and standardizing booking requests, the ocean shipment booking request enables faster coordination, better planning, and improved reliability across global shipping and intermodal logistics networks.

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