



U.S. Bank Freight Payment Index: Truck freight market continues to contract

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Both volume and spending declined in fourth quarter

MINNEAPOLIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- The truck freight market closed out 2024 with further declines in shipments and spending, according to the latest [U.S. Bank Freight Payment Index](#). Fourth quarter shipment volume was down 4.7% compared to the prior quarter while spending dropped 2.2%.

"It's clear there are both cyclical and structural challenges remaining as we look for a truck freight market reboot," said Bob Costello, senior vice president and chief economist at the American Trucking Associations. "For instance, factory output softness – which has a disproportionate impact on truck freight volumes – is currently weighing heavily on our industry."

Fourth-quarter shipment volume was low across all regions. Hurricanes impacted freight activity in the Southeast, where shipments dropped 6.7%, the most of all regions. The Northeast had the smallest decline at 1.2% with the West just behind with a contraction of 2.1%. For spending, three regions avoided contractions, with Northeast spend up 0.9%, the West up 0.1% and the Southwest flat (0.0%).

"While this quarter's Index revealed spending overall on truck freight continues to decline, we did see some signs that spending per truck is increasing," said Bobby Holland, U.S. Bank director of freight business analytics. "Shipments falling more than spending – even with lower fuel surcharges – suggests tighter capacity."

The U.S. Bank Freight Payment Index measures quantitative changes in freight shipments and spend activity based on data from transactions processed through [U.S. Bank Freight Payment](#), which processes more than \$43 billion in freight payments annually for shippers and carriers across the U.S. The Index insights are provided to U.S. Bank customers to help them make business decisions and discover new opportunities.

Data

National

Shipments

Linked quarter: -4.7%

Year over year: -15.7%

Spending

Linked quarter: -2.2%

Year over year: -22.0%

Regional

West

Shipments

Linked quarter: -2.1%

Year over year: -10.1%

Spending

Linked quarter: 0.1%

Year over year: -18.2%

The decline in shipments in the West followed two consecutive quarters of volume growth. The fact that shippers spent 0.1% more to have 2.1% less moved suggests tighter trucking capacity in the region.

Southwest

Shipments

Linked quarter: -5.1%

Year over year: -17.2%

Spending

Linked quarter: 0.0%

Year over year: -17.5%

Volumes declined in the Southwest for the third consecutive quarter, partly the result of soft demand for manufactured goods and slower construction activity.

Midwest

Shipments

Linked quarter: -5.2%

Year over year: -16.2%

Spending

Linked quarter: -1.7%

Year over year: -24.2%

Following modest volume growth in the third quarter, shipments dropped 5.2% in the final months of 2024. Softer manufacturing activity and weak home construction in the region impacted truck freight activity.

Northeast

Shipments

Linked quarter: -1.2%

Year over year: -18.6%

Spending

Linked quarter: 0.9%

Year over year: -25.1%

The Northeast had the largest gain in truck freight spending, suggesting tighter capacity in the region. Recent volume declines in the region have been modest following a 17.5% decline in the first quarter of 2024.

Southeast

Shipments

Linked quarter: -6.7%

Year over year: -16.1%

Spending

Linked quarter: -6.7%

Year over year: -22.9%

The Southeast had the steepest drops in volume and spending among all regions. Weaker auto production and in the broader factory sector contributed to these declines.

To see the full report including in-depth regional data, visit the [U.S. Bank Freight Payment Index website](#). For more than 25 years, organizations have turned to U.S. Bank Freight Payment for the service, reliability, and security of a full-service, federally regulated financial institution and payments provider. The U.S. Bank Freight Payment Index measures quantitative changes in freight shipments and spend activity based on data from transactions processed through [U.S. Bank Freight Payment](#). The U.S. Bank Freight Payment Index source data is based on the actual transaction payment date and contains volume from domestic freight modes (truckload and less-than-truckload) and is both seasonally and calendar adjusted.

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