

October cargo volumes decline at Texas ports, rise in New Orleans

New Orleans sees increased container flows, Houston and Corpus Christi record decreases in steel, crude oil shipments

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Monday, November 20, 2023



Imports of steel and rubber helped the Port of New Orleans increase its container traffic 2.7% year over year in October compared to the same period in 2022. (Photo: Port of New Orleans)

Container freight flows and crude oil shipments declined slightly in Houston and Corpus Christi, Texas, during October, while container traffic rose at the Port of New Orleans, helped by movements of steel and rubber commodities.

Port Houston records cargo declines for third straight month

[Port Houston](#) saw container cargo volume slip for the third consecutive month.

The port processed a total of 366,208 twenty-foot equivalent units in October, a 2% drop from the same month in 2022.

Loaded exports in October reached 126,011 TEUs, a 6% year-over-year (y/y) increase, boosted by shipments of resins, according to a news release. Loaded imports fell 4% y/y in October at 174,929 TEUs.

Empty container imports surged 52% y/y in October to 12,321 TEUs, while exports of empty containers fell 17% y/y to 52,947 TEUs.

Imports of steel were down 1% y/y at 292,403 TEUs, while exports fell 661% to 39,873 TEUs.

Total tonnage through the port is down 7% year to date compared to 2022, at 42 million short

tons. Steel volumes were down 13% from January through October compared to the same year-ago period.

Auto import units increased 50% y/y in October, the port said in a news release.

Port Houston also recently completed the Wharf 6 project at its Bayport Container Terminal. The new berth is equipped with three ship-to-shore cranes, which will add capacity for both import and export customers, officials said.

"We are excited to announce the arrival of the first vessel at [Wharf 6], which symbolizes a bright future for the port and the culmination of more than five years of planning," Roger Guenther, executive director at Port Houston, said in a [news release](#). "This addition was a significant infrastructure investment and demonstrates our commitment to creating a dependable and efficient terminal environment for our customers."

Bayport Container Terminal's Wharf 7 is slated to be commissioned in 2025, the same year reconstruction of the port's Barbours Cut wharves 5 and 6 will be completed. Bayport's Container Yard 7 project includes the construction of 45 acres of a concrete bulk terminal for increased container storage.

Crude oil exports slip in October at Port of Corpus Christi

[The Port of Corpus Christi](#) posted its first y/y decline in total shipments in 2023 during October, handling 16.5 million tons, a 1.8% decrease from the same period last year.

Total shipments of crude oil also recorded the first y/y decline in 2023 during October, marking a 0.5% y/y decrease while handling 10.234 million tons compared to 10.284 million tons in October 2022.

Exports of crude oil totaled 9.72 million tons, a 3% increase compared to the same year-ago period. Imports of crude oil fell 41% y/y to 510,253 tons.

Petroleum shipments decreased 2.4% y/y to 5.32 million tons. Exports of petroleum totaled 3.9 million tons during October, a 9% y/y decrease.

Dry bulk cargo decreased 16% y/y to 491,136 tons, while chemical cargo volumes totaled 206,123 tons in October, a 31% y/y decrease from 2022.

Shipments of bulk grain increased 35% y/y to 160,750 tons.

The Port of Corpus Christi had 446 barge calls during the month, a 13% y/y decline. Ship calls during October totaled 202, a 7.3% y/y decrease compared to 2022.

Port of New Orleans sees gains in container volumes

[The Port of New Orleans](#) saw increased container cargo volumes during October, helped by imports of steel, rubber and coffee. Top container exports during the month included plastic resins and chemicals.

Container cargo totaled 41,934 TEUs in October, up 3% compared to the same month last year.

The port recorded breakbulk tonnage of 107,235 short tons in October, a 29% y/y drop. The majority of breakbulk cargo consisted of steel and rubber imports, port officials said.

The port handled 8,804 Class I rail car switches in October, a 70% y/y decrease. The port handles switching operations for the six Class I railroads that operate in New Orleans: BNSF Railway, CN, CSX, Kansas City Southern, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific.