

Hurricane Beryl trims cargo volumes in Houston and New Orleans

Houston and New Orleans had fewer container moves in July; crude oil shipments boost Port of Corpus Christi

[Noi Mahoney](#)

Tuesday, August 27, 2024



Port Houston officials said part of the year-over-year decline in cargo volumes in July was related to the impact of Hurricane Beryl and a global systems outage that briefly disrupted port operations. (Photo: Jim Allen/FreightWaves)

Ports in Houston and New Orleans recorded slight drops in container movements in July, while shipments of crude oil boosted freight flows at the Port of Corpus Christi, Texas.

Port Houston July cargo movements impacted by Hurricane Beryl, global system outage

[Port Houston's](#) container volume dipped 5% year over year in July to 325,277 twenty-foot equivalent units compared to the same month last year.

Port officials said part of the drop during the month was related to the impact of Hurricane Beryl and a global systems outage that briefly disrupted operations.

Port Houston was closed July 8-9 after [Beryl](#) made landfall in Texas as a Category 1 hurricane. The port also briefly closed its Barbour's Cut and Bayport Container terminal July 19 due to a faulty software update from [CrowdStrike](#) that disrupted internet services globally.

"Locally we faced some challenges this month, but our team excelled at rebounding quickly and maintaining the customer service Port Houston is known for," Roger Guenther, Port Houston's executive director, said in a [news release](#).

Imports into Port Houston during the month included plywood, wind power equipment and wood/fiberboard, Guenther said.

Steel imports decreased by 14% year over year in July to 367,915 tons. Exports of steel were down 40% year over year to 18,955 tons.

Movements of empty import containers increased 17% year over year in July to 12,727 twenty-foot equivalent units, as global ocean carriers reposition containers for import cargo, according to a news release. Empty export containers declined 14% year over year to 42,378 TEUs.

Loaded import containers were down 5% year over year in July at 157,565 TEUs, while loaded exports were down 4% year over year at 112,607.

Total tonnage increased across all facilities 3% year to date, totaling 31 million tons.

Year-to-date container volumes at the port are up 10% compared to the same period in 2023, reaching 2.4 million TEUs from January through July.

Port Houston had 334 barge calls in July, a 16% year-over-year increase. The port had 665 ship calls during the month, a 4% decrease compared to July 2023.

Related: [Port Houston saw container exports surge in June](#)

Port of New Orleans container shipments drop

[The Port of New Orleans](#) reported a 19% year-over-year drop in container volumes in July with 36,266 TEUs.

The port also recorded a 7% year-over-year decline in total breakbulk tonnage at 67,837 short tons during the month.

Kimberly Curth, port spokeswoman, said ports around the world are facing supply chain challenges that continue to impact freight flows.

“Regarding containerized cargo, the reduced number of calls is consistent with a number of challenges that carriers are currently facing, such as the ongoing congestion in several South American and Asian ports, the continued disruption in the Suez Canal and Hurricane Beryl, which affected operations in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico in July,” Curth told FreightWaves in an email.

The Port of New Orleans saw containerized imports of wood products, rubber articles, chemicals and coffee in July, Curth said.

Containerized cargo exports included plastic resins, paper products and various chemicals. The top breakbulk cargo during July was steel.

The port handled 10,846 Class I rail car switches in July, a 21% year-over-year increase from July 2023. The port handles switching operations for six Class I railroads: BNSF, CN, CSX, CPKC, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific.

Port of Corpus Christi's crude oil shipments up 13% in July

[The Port of Corpus Christi](#) recorded a 13% year-over-year increase in crude oil shipments during July, handling 11.56 million tons.

Exports of crude oil totaled 10.8 million tons in July, a 13% year-over-year increase. Imports of crude oil were up 8% year over year during the month to 681,049 tons.

Petroleum shipments decreased 3.7% year over year in July to 5.12 million tons. Exports of petroleum were down 2.4% year over year at 4 million tons during the month. Imports of petroleum declined 1% compared to the same year-ago period.

Dry bulk cargo fell 21% year over year in July to 539,072 tons, while chemical bulk shipments rose 3.2% year over year to 272,579 tons.

Corpus Christi's bulk grain shipments decreased 8.5% year over year to 266,665 tons.

The port had 402 barge calls in July, a 21% year-over-year decrease from the same month in 2023, while ship calls totaled 206, compared to 197 last year.