

## Prolonged US port strike could raise demand for charter vessels

An extended US East Coast port shut down could see demand for chartered container ship tonnage increase as carriers look to add tonnage to compensate for congestion and delay.

[Nick Savvides](#), Europe correspondent

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Credit: AdobeStock

Consultancy [Alphaliner](#) reported today that non-vessel operating companies were “watching with interest” after the last-ditch attempts to avoid industrial action failed.

According to Alphaliner industry expectations of chaos ensuing from the strike “will inevitably see [ships] queuing up outside ports, deviating to strike-free terminals or simply cutting short their rotations.”

Smaller vessels, of around 2,000 teu are likely to benefit from any move to charter vessels, and with larger vessels largely unavailable, these more modest sizes are likely to be fixed at a premium.

Nevertheless, “The charter market remains healthy,” said the analyst, “across the board, with a high demand for most sizes of vessels. [Cosco Shipping Lines](#), [Maersk](#), [Hapag-Lloyd](#) and [ONE](#) have been particularly busy securing or extending tonnage. The Golden Week in China is however expected to slow down the overall chartering activity, but that will be temporary only.”

In addition, Alphaliner reports that the idle fleet is just 0.6% of the fleet, 56 ships of 196,717 teu in total, by 23 September, a slight increase on the previous fortnight.

Another 131 ships of 475,665 teu, vessels were in shipyards for repair, refit, conversion or maintenance, a decline from 139 ships of 579,224 teu on 9 September.

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New tonnage continues to be delivered at pace with Linerlytica reporting 52 ships of 191,591 teu were delivered over the last month. Another 1.7 million teu is expected to be delivered by February next year.