

October freight traffic mixed at Gulf Coast ports

Container volumes slow in Houston and New Orleans, oil shipments rise in Corpus Christi, Texas

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Port Houston's container volumes fell 15% year over year in October to 309,623 twenty-foot equivalent units. (Photo: Jim Allen/FreightWaves)

Ports in Houston and New Orleans reported decreasing container volumes in October, while demand for exports of crude oil remained strong at the Port of Corpus Christi, Texas.

Port Houston container volumes down 15%

Container volumes fell 15% year over year to 309,623 twenty-foot equivalent units at Port Houston compared to last October, slowed by decreasing shipments of steel products.

Steel imports saw a 25% year-over-year drop for the month to 218,984 short tons, reflecting a 7% year-over-year decrease in Texas onshore and offshore rig activity, according to a [news release](#).

Loaded exports in October fell 13% year over year to 152,879 TEUs. Loaded imports fell 21% year over year in October to 99,013 TEUs.

Empty container exports decreased 6% year over year to 49,971 TEUs, while imports of empty containers fell 37% year over year to 7,760 TEUs.

Total import tonnage declined 14% year over year in October to 2.1 million tons. Total export tonnage fell 5% year over year to 2.5 million tons.

Year to date, Port Houston has handled 3.4 million TEUs through October, a 7% year-over-year increase from the same period in 2023.

Port of New Orleans sees dip in container volumes, increase in breakbulk cargo

The Port of New Orleans saw a 20% year-over-year decline in container volume to 33,396 TEUs.

Container cargo volumes during October mainly consisted of exports of plastic resins, chemicals and paper. Coffee, wood products and chemicals were the main imports.

The Port of New Orleans recorded breakbulk tonnage of 109,539 short tons in October, a 2% year-over-year increase. Imports of steel increased during the month, port officials said.

In October, the port handled 9,627 Class I railcar switches, a 1% year-over-year decrease from October 2023. The port handles switching operations for six Class I railroads: BNSF, CN, CSX, CPKC, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific.

Crude oil shipments rise at Port of Corpus Christi

The Port of Corpus Christi handled 17.8 million tons of cargo in October, an 8% year-over-year increase compared to the same year-ago month.

Total shipments of crude oil rose 10% year over year at the port in October, when Corpus Christi handled 11.2 million tons.

Exports of crude oil totaled 10.3 million tons, a 6% year-over-year increase. Imports rose 79% year over year to 912,134 tons.

Petroleum shipments decreased 2% year over year to 5.2 million tons, with exports totaling 4.1 million tons during the month.

Dry bulk cargo rose 70% year over year to 833,685 tons, while shipments of chemicals increased 42% to 293,240 tons.

Bulk grain shipments increased 43% year over year to 230,075 tons.

Liquid bulk cargo volumes totaled exports of 6,179.49 tons in October, a 90% year-over-year decrease from 2023.

The Port of Corpus Christi had 422 barge calls in October, a 6% year-over-year decline. Ship calls during the month totaled 209, compared to 202 in October 2023.