FMI Releases Five-Point Drayage Quote Transparency Framework

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ITASCA, IL - July 30, 2026 -
Freight Management Inc. has released a five-point drayage quote transparency framework. The framework was developed in response to recurring concerns raised during recent customer and prospect conversations about rates presented as ?all-in? that were later revised, supplemented with additional charges or supported by carrier capacity that did not match the move.

The framework is intended to help U.S. shippers and freight forwarders determine whether competing quotes are complete, comparable and based on an executable container movement. Logistics teams often request pricing from several providers at once, but the opening totals may reflect different terminals, equipment, carrier qualifications, planned services and levels of capacity commitment.

FMI?s framework calls for each quote to identify the exact move, match the required equipment and carrier qualifications, separate base transportation from required services, distinguish known, likely and contingent charges, and state the carrier status, rate validity and conditions that could require repricing.

The exact port, rail ramp and terminal must be identified because a broad market description can conceal material differences. A move described as originating in Chicago, for example, may involve a Joliet rail facility or another terminal with different mileage, chassis arrangements, appointments and return requirements. The quote must also reflect reefer, overweight, hazardous, in-bond and specialized chassis requirements, along with planned services such as a prepull, chassis split, flip, storage or drop-and-retrieval movement.

?An all-in rate can create a false sense of certainty when later events are still outside anyone?s control,? said Bob Mayo, president and CEO of Freight Management Inc. ?If a provider wins the move with a number that cannot be supported, the customer may be rebilled, the carrier may be pressured to absorb part of the difference or the broker may turn to less-proven capacity. None of those outcomes makes the original quote more transparent.?

The framework separates core transportation from planned services and event-driven costs. Linehaul and fuel form the base of many drayage quotes, while chassis use and other operating requirements may need to be added. Known charges are already required by the move. Likely charges are reasonably foreseeable from the timing, terminal or delivery plan. Contingent charges depend on later events such as extended equipment use, changed instructions, detention, demurrage or a missed appointment. FMI provides a more detailed explanation of these categories in its drayage rate breakdown.

The framework does not suggest that every future cost can be predicted. It calls for providers to disclose what is known, explain what is likely and identify which costs depend on later events. FMI?s position is that a foreseeable requirement should not be excluded solely to make the opening number appear lower.

Carrier selection is also part of the comparison. A low response may not reflect the necessary terminal experience, equipment, qualifications or service history. According to FMI, repeated short-payment, disputed-charge or nonpayment problems can damage carrier relationships and reduce the dependable capacity willing to accept future work.

The fifth element addresses carrier status, rate validity and repricing conditions. Buyers should know whether qualified capacity has been confirmed, whether the amount reflects an actual carrier response or a target rate, how long the price remains valid and which shipment changes could invalidate the assumptions. Tariffs may provide a starting point, but the actual terminal, equipment, timing and capacity can still require spot-market pricing.

FMI uses Draydex to distribute rate requests, collect carrier responses and retain historical pricing. A process that may require hours of individual calls and emails can often be managed through the system in minutes, depending on lane complexity and carrier response. The stored information provides context when FMI later reviews the same carriers, lanes or facilities.

Technology organizes the responses, while operational experience helps determine whether the carrier, terminal, equipment and price make sense together. FMI evaluates historical pricing, whether previous quotes remained accurate, terminal familiarity and the availability of the necessary equipment and qualifications.

?FMI is not trying to win the spreadsheet and lose the shipment,? Mayo said. ?The goal is to present a competitive rate that reflects the actual move, can be explained before booking and is supported by a carrier capable of performing the work. The lowest number is not the best value when the customer or carrier is left dealing with the difference later.?

The framework is intended to help logistics teams compare the expected cost, capacity and operating assumptions behind each quote. Additional information about carrier coordination and the role of a brokerage in container movements is available in FMI?s drayage broker guide.

Freight Management Inc. is a U.S.-based, non-asset freight brokerage and logistics provider with more than 40 years of transportation experience.

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For more information about Freight Management Inc., contact the company here:Freight Management Inc.Bob Mayo(630) 627-6560info@gofmi.com500 Park Blvd, Suite 1420, Itasca, IL 60143

Freight Management Inc.

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Website: https://gofmi.com/

Email: info@gofmi.com

Phone: (630) 627-6560