

# HOW TO CHOOSE A CARRIER THAT'S PREPARED FOR THE WEATHER

In addition to wreaking havoc on homes, schools and schedules, shippers know that severe weather can disrupt the supply chain and cause delays in delivering product to customers. If you're operating in a region that's susceptible to hurricanes, tornadoes or snowstorms, you want to be sure that your transportation provider is prepared for whatever Mother Nature throws its way. This holds true whether you're looking for a truckload, intermodal, bulk or LTL provider.

To choose a carrier that is prepared for the weather, look for a transportation provider that has all six of these characteristics:



## #1 ASSET-BASED FLEET AND NON-ASSET CAPABILITIES



## #2 MULTIMODAL CAPABILITIES



## #3 NATIONWIDE NETWORK



## #4 REGULAR WEATHER MONITORING AND COMMUNICATION



## #5 BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN



## #6 FOCUS ON SAFETY

### #1: ASSET-BASED FLEET AND NON-ASSET CAPABILITIES

Asset-based carriers have more control over their equipment, meaning they can more swiftly provide solutions when extreme weather hits. Asset-based carriers look at the whole transportation journey, rather than just the individual portion that non-asset-based carriers are responsible for. In looking at the whole picture, asset-based carriers are able to adjust the supply chain as needed, expediting freight to reach an area before a storm hits or holding freight at a staging area, so it doesn't travel into a storm.

Not just any carrier will fit the bill. It's important to look for one that has a large inventory of equipment. These carriers will have the resources to create pop-up fleets, or temporary dedicated fleets, when an area needs to be serviced quickly. Make sure your transportation provider also has access to non-asset capabilities. During weather episodes, local third-party carriers who know the area can provide more capability. It's important to already have those relationships established with local carriers who can easily and quickly execute on emergency freight needs on your behalf to save you time and money.

## #2: MULTIMODAL CAPABILITIES

During serious weather events, a multimodal carrier can switch freight to a different mode of transportation that operates out of the path of the storm. Similarly, a multimodal carrier can provide a different mode when the original mode is affected by weather. For example, if a flood washes out a section of road but the railroad is still operational, a multimodal carrier might change a truckload shipment to intermodal, preventing delays. Multimodal carriers are not limited by their service offerings, nor would they avoid recommending a different mode of transportation that would mean sending a shipper to another carrier.

## #3: NATIONWIDE NETWORK

Carriers with nationwide networks are able to pull trucks, trailers and drivers from other parts of the country to operate in place of affected trucks, trailers and drivers. Carriers who are limited to a regional operation often don't have the resources to keep freight moving when their area is affected by extreme weather, causing shipments to be delayed until they can get back on their feet.

Additionally, a carrier that has nationwide reach may have distribution centers or warehouses throughout the country that can be used during weather situations. For example, if a shipment heading from Chicago to Houston can't be delivered because of severe weather in Houston, a carrier may be able to store the load in its distribution center in Dallas until it can be delivered to the destination.

## #4: REGULAR WEATHER MONITORING AND COMMUNICATION

It's difficult to prepare for weather if you don't know what's coming. Look for a carrier that has a robust process for regularly monitoring weather. In serious weather situations, carriers should be carefully monitoring before, during and after a storm.

Effective communication is important every day, but it is especially critical during inclement weather situations. A carrier that is prepared will share updates with associates, drivers and shippers often. Logistics providers should be communicating just as frequently with carriers and brokers.

## #5: BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Not only should carriers have a plan in place to handle weather situations when it comes to their drivers and freight on the road or rail, they should also have a plan when weather affects their offices or operating centers. Even with diligent monitoring, weather can be unpredictable, and carriers need a plan in place to keep business moving.

An effective business continuity plan covers many details, such as an IT system backup plan if offices lose power, a stock of trucks and trailers in a secondary location if the primary location is affected by weather, and a plan to move assets to higher ground if located in areas at risk of flooding.

## #6: FOCUS ON SAFETY

Last but not least, carriers should have a focus on safety. Extreme weather can pose great danger to truck drivers as well as people traveling on the roads with them. Carriers should regularly train drivers, maintenance technicians and support staff on weather preparedness. Carriers should also have safety-focused policies that allow drivers to be captains of their ships, choosing not to drive if they feel unsafe. Logistics providers should be vetting carriers for similar safety practices to ensure safe shipping.

**Avoid disruption in your supply chain due to weather by choosing a carrier that checks all six of these boxes.** Check out the Knowledge Hub for more tips on preventing weather from affecting your freight, including best practices for [temperature protection](#).

