



GETTING THE PERFECT **SPOT RATE**

**10-POINT CHECKLIST FOR  
BETTER FREIGHT QUOTES**

# 1. Gather & confirm your shipment details.

What you'll need for an accurate **truckload spot quote:**

- Origin city or zip code
- Destination city or zip code
- Pickup date
- Equipment type  
*(i.e., dry van, refrigerated, flatbed, RGN, etc.)*
- Commodity type
- Product weight

What you'll need for an accurate **LTL spot quote:**

- All of the information on the left  
*(same as truckload)*
- **Freight Class and NMFC code**
- Dimensions of each packaged commodity
- Any **accessorials**

## 2. Make note of any special shipping requirements.

If your shipment has any non-standard requirements, make sure to confirm with your provider.

To avoid surprises and service disruptions, when in doubt, ask — don't assume.

### Examples of **Non-Standard** Shipping Requirements:

- Drop trailer
- Hazardous materials
- Multi-stop pick up / delivery
- Driver assist
- Floor-loaded / non-palletized product
- +2 hours of loading/unloading
- Non-standard trailer requirements (liftgate, roll doors, etc.)
- Special driver equipment (load straps, safety vest, etc.)
- Heavy haul / over dimensional
- Non-standard transit

### 3. Understand the state of the freight market.

Review current [freight market conditions and forecasts](#) so you can plan with confidence.

### 4. Set your pick up and delivery appointments.

- **Flexibility is your friend.**

Try to set pick and delivery windows instead of strict appointments — it can open you up to more capacity options.

- **Avoid after-hours or weekends.**

These will likely increase your rate.

- **Try to avoid shipping around holidays.**

End-of-month and end-of-quarter are also busier shipping times, which can impact spot rates.

- **LTL uses windows.**

In LTL shipping, pick up and delivery windows are standard (not appointments).

## 5. Go digital for faster spot quotes.

Stop waiting for emails. Sign up for your providers' [digital freight platforms](#) for instant, on-demand quoting. Even if you have additional requirements or questions, you can at least get a rough estimate of the market.

## 6. Request your quote ASAP.

As soon as you have all your shipment details confirmed, start getting quotes.

The closer you get to the shipping date, the higher your spot rate will (probably) go. Ideally, you can start requesting quotes at least a week in advance.

## 7. Shop around.

Having a huge list of carriers is not a solid **Shipper of Choice** strategy, but you should at least check with a few providers.

Get a short list of your trusted carriers and 3PLs and rely on them. Don't be afraid to ask questions or negotiate — transparency with your core providers will help both parties to stay in-line with market conditions.

## 8. Know what your rate includes.

Is it all-in (with fuel surcharge) or a **linehaul rate**?

Are you familiar with your provider's **accessorial schedule**?

Make sure you know exactly what you're paying for up front.

## 9. Consider other factors besides cost.

Price should just be one component of your decision-making process. **A cheap spot rate with bad service will end up costing your business more.**

- On-time performance & reliability
- Capacity & coverage
- Ease of doing business
- Customer service & issue resolution
- Expertise
- Fit to overall carrier strategy

## 10. Lock in your rate.

Once you have made your decision, confirm the rate with your 3PL or carrier right away. This will lock in your spot rate while giving your provider plenty of lead time to get the best capacity options for your freight.



# 10 Steps to Getting the Perfect Spot Rate

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2. Make note of any special shipping requirements.
3. Understand the state of the freight market.
4. Set your pick up and delivery appointments.
5. Go digital for faster spot quotes.
6. Request your quote ASAP.
7. Shop around.
8. Know what your rate includes
9. Consider other factors besides cost.
10. Lock in your rate.

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