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Measures to augment safe and secure transportation of goods by rail

Overview

When we mention railways, the first thing we think of is passenger services. However, we must not forget the role of the freight train; in fact, freight is what the railways were originally invented for - to carry heavy loads of coal and other minerals in greater quantities and at higher speeds.

Rail transport is a safe land transportation system compared to other forms of transportation. It is capable of carrying large amounts of cargo and is also fuel efficient. It also costs less than air or road transport, can transport more quantity and is suitable for the movement of large consignments over long distances. Rails can carry about 6 times more tonnage than that could be carried by road.

We at Liberty Videocon General Insurance value the safe carriage of your consignment by rail; and intend to suggest some useful measures to ensure safe and proper transportation of goods. We sincerely hope that the measures suggested in this document will help in transporting goods by rail in a safe and secure manner.



Source: http://www.supplychaindigital.com/global_logistics/assets_c/2012/08/FreightRail-thumb-622x467-72938.jpg

Packaging

Packaging is utmost relevant and important. Since there is lot of handling, loading and unloading, rails do not provide door to door services and hence occasional shunting will also be necessitated. These factors should be kept in mind while packing the goods for rail transport.

Cargo should clearly mention name and address of the receiver, station and zone / destination. If the goods are fragile in nature or require special handling, they should carry suitable tags like 'Handle with care' or 'Fragile - handle with care' etc. This would enable the railway authorities to handle the goods with appropriate care and caution.

Tips for safe transportation of goods by rail

If the forwarding note records defective condition of the goods or packing, the railways would exempt themselves from damage deterioration, leakage, breakage or wastage, unless negligence is proved by the party receiving the goods.



noteworthy to highlight that, the railways exclude themselves from liability towards loss, destruction or deterioration or non-delivery in transit of such goods, howsoever caused, except on submission of proof of negligence and/or misconduct on the part of railways or any of its servants.

It is very important to disclose to the railway authorities if the goods are carried at "Owner's" risk rate or "Railway" risk rate. In the event of non-disclosure, the railway authorities would deem that the carriage has been entrusted at owner's risk rate. It is



Railways are responsible as common carriers while the goods are in transit, and also as a bailee as per the Indian Contract Act 1872 for a period of 7 days after transit. The liability of the Railways ceases after expiry of 7 days from the termination of transit. Hence, it is



imperative that the consignee stays in touch with the railway authorities at the destination station immediately upon receiving the Railway Receipt.

In case of non-delivery of consignment within a reasonable period of time, the consignee should get the Railway Receipt endorsed by the station master on the reverse. He must undertake this activity every week for a period of 6 weeks. In case of further delay in delivery, he should obtain a non-delivery certificate from the station master.

After the date of dispatch, if the goods are not received by the consignee after expiry of three months from the date when they were originally booked, it is important to lodge a monetary claim on General Managers of all concerned railway administration with copies to the Commercial Superintendents by registered post with due acknowledgement. The consignee must never surrender the original railway receipt to the railways when the goods have not been delivered. He should take proper advice from his insurers.



While at the time of receiving the goods it is found that packages are tampered and where there are apparent signs of loss or damage, the consignee should always demand open delivery. He should not give clean receipt to the Railway for defective packages.



It is imperative for the consignors to declare the description of the goods and value thereof to the railways at the time of booking and appropriate freight needs to be paid to them.



In case of wagon loads, it is very important to check the labels and seals of the wagon. Should there be any tampering noticed, the consignees should insist on assessed delivery.



It should always be remembered that where there are shortages from outwardly sound packing and where wagons arrived with seals intact, the reason could be due to short packing and should be taken up with the supplier immediately.



Trivia

Indian Railways

- Carries over 1.3 million tons of freight everyday
- Runs about 14,300 trains daily
- Has about 7,000 railway stations
- Is one of the largest public sector employers in the world, employing about 14 lac employees
- According to the Association of American Railroads, a freight train uses only 1 gallon (3.78 ltr.) of diesel fuel to move a ton of freight 702 km.
- According to Guinness Book of World Records, the heaviest freight train on record weighed 220 million pounds and was more than 4.5 miles long.



Source: <http://saiworld.co.in/images/inland-rail.jpg>

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