

JTS Johanson Transportation Service

Freight Industry Guidebook

Topical insights from JTS Thought Leaders

A Plain-English Reference Guide to Accessorial Fees for LTL Shippers

By Craig Johannson, President - LTL Division

Weeks after your LTL freight ships, an invoice arrives for hundreds more than you were quoted. Now you're verifying charges, filing a dispute, and waiting on reconciliation before the carrier gets paid. It's a common and costly problem. Accessorial charges often surface only after a shipment has left the dock and the details stay hidden until the carrier reaches the delivery point.

Most surprise charges come from four accessorials:

- liftgate requirements
- residential deliveries
- inside deliveries
- detention fees

Liftgate fees

Liftgate fees are the most common. LTL carriers assume dock-to-dock delivery. If the pickup or delivery location has no raised loading dock or forklift , the driver must use a liftgate to move freight between the trailer and the ground. If the assigned truck doesn't have one, the carrier must send a liftgate-equipped truck. Either way, the service adds time and safety risk.

Common examples include residences, retail storefronts, construction sites and schools. Liftgate fees typically start at $75–$100 per event, and some carriers charge twice that.

Tip: Confirm whether each pickup and delivery location has a dock or forklift, and request liftgate service on the bill of lading (BOL) at booking.

Residential delivery fees

Residential deliveries take extra time, fuel and planning. Drivers must navigate narrow streets, low bridges, low-hanging trees, cul-de-sacs and tight parking — all of which can throw off a delivery schedule. These deliveries often require a liftgate as well, so the two fees commonly appear together.

Tip: Flag residential addresses at booking — including home-based businesses, which carriers often classify as residential.

Inside delivery fees

Moving freight past the entryway — down a narrow hallway or up an elevator — is a separate accessorial called inside delivery. The extra time can also add detention charges.

Many LTL drivers work on tight schedules, and some union contracts limit how far a driver can move freight beyond the entryway. If a receiver insists on inside delivery that wasn't booked, the driver can refuse and return the freight to the terminal — triggering a redelivery fee, sometimes double the original rate.

Tip: If freight must go beyond the dock door or front entrance, book inside delivery up front.

Detention fees

When a carrier must wait past the free time allowed in the carrier contract — typically 15 to 30 minutes for LTL — it charges the shipper for the driver's time.

Common causes include dock congestion, slow loading or unloading, and staffing shortages.

LTL detention fees typically range from $30 to $150+ per hour, depending on the cargo and where it's held. If the driver can't wait, they may leave, and you can be charged a redelivery fee on top of detention.

Tip: Schedule appointments you can meet and have dock staff ready when the truck arrives.

Solution – An Intelligent, Automated Accessorial Spotter

A modern TMS should flag accessorials up front, during booking. JTS' arriviture® 2.0 TMS does exactly that.

As you enter an order an order, arriviture automatically identifies accessorial requirements in real time, using Shiplify's AI-driven upstream verification and Google Maps satellite imagery. To help prevent detention, arriviture sends the shipper check-in timestamps and an email alert when a load is within 15 minutes of detention time. That gives a logistics manager or dock supervisor time to clear a bottleneck or reassign dock staff before the free time runs out.

The result: Accessorials are identified at booking, so you see fewer billing surprises and fewer disputes.

For more information on arriviture, contact arriviture@johansontrans.com or call (800) 261-6690.

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