STEELWHEELS.CO™ | CHANGE THE QUESTION.

ADVISORY · OPERATIONS · IN THE FIELD

EXPOSURE READ 27 · OVERVIEW

THE FIRST CAR

For anyone about to ship or receive his first carload.

A read of what a plant takes on when it ships its first car: the serving railroad's paper, the federal rules that bind the shipper as firmly as the carrier, and the industry's rules for loading a car. This overview sets out the question the Read answers and the seven things it examines.

07

WHAT WE EXAMINE

Each one read in your paper and at your dock.

ISSUED BY

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Animis opibusque parati.

§ 01 A SET OF RULES, NOT A RATE

WHAT YOU CAME HERE FOR

> *What you came here for:* **What do we need to know before we ship our first carload by rail?**

You want the first car ordered, loaded, papered and gone without a surprise on the first invoice. *You want the railroad to treat you as a shipper who knows what he is doing.*

And under it, mostly unsaid: you want to know what you are signing up for before the paper arrives, and whether the charges that come later start on your side of the gate. You did not open a rail spur to learn a second trade. You would like to know how much of one you have to learn.

§ 02 · THE QUESTION, RESTATED · *what the rules cost while nobody has read them*

> *The question this Read asks:* **what the railroad's rules will cost us in our first year, in charges, claims and idle cars, that we could have read before the first car came.**

A truck waits at your dock on the driver's time. A rail car is placed, and from that moment the clock runs on your side of the gate. *The car belongs to somebody else. The track under it may belong to you.*

None of this is hostile. It is how a network shared by thousands of shippers keeps its cars moving. The railroad expects you to order what you need, load it to the rules, weigh it, paper it correctly and release it on time. You may expect a written service window, an invoice that shows its work, a car fit for the load and a claim answered within the time the regulations set. **Both sides' obligations are written down. The new shipper's exposure is not knowing where.** The load inside the car is held to published rules of its own, and the shipper's name is on it.

It cuts both ways. *Some plants find the paper kinder than they feared*, and that is worth knowing before the first car too.

So what the rate will be is the second question. The first is what the rules will cost you while nobody at the plant has read them, and that has an answer in paper you can hold.

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§ 03 EACH ONE READ IN YOUR PAPER AND AT YOUR DOCK

WHAT WE EXAMINE

Seven things decide what the railroad's rules will cost a new shipper in the first year. *Each is read in your own paper, and then at your own dock and track.*

	WHAT WE LOOK AT	WHY IT MATTERS TO YOUR OPERATION
01	Which paper governs your traffic: a contract, an exemption or a tariff	Each one sets different charges, different liability and different claim terms, and the one you have not read is still the one you agreed to.
02	Your service window and cut-off, and where each is written	A window that is not written down is whatever the local can manage that day.
03	How cars are ordered, and against what forecast	An empty car you cannot load is not service. It is a charge waiting to be billed.
04	How each car is loaded, blocked, braced and secured, and how it is weighed	A load that moves in transit is still the shipper's load, wherever the railroad finds it. The weight that leaves your gate is your weight, on every mile it travels.
05	Your notice of the demurrage tariff, and who reconciles the invoice	The charge for holding a car rests on paper most new shippers never asked for.
06	Anything hazardous you ship, even as residue, and the people who touch it	The regulations treat the shipper as the first link in the chain, not the last.
07	Who files a claim, by when, and from what record	A claim without a record made at the door is a recollection.

§ 04 · WHAT THIS ADDS UP TO · *and how to reach us*

Seven things, settled in writing before the first car, set what the railroad's rules will cost you. *Left unsettled, they are settled by the first invoice, on its terms.*

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Where the Wheels meet the Steel

The work is done on the day the plant knows which paper governs its traffic, keeps its own record of every car, and reads every invoice against it. The railroader who takes it reads your paper and walks your dock and track, signs what he finds and answers for it from the first day to the last, and after. Nobody we send learns railroading on your property. Write with the plant, the railroad that serves it and what you plan to ship or receive. You will have a reply within one business day, from the principal and not from a form. Writing puts you on no list. If what we find says you have no problem, you will be told so.

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FIND IT. NAME IT. DISSOLVE IT. · READ ON THE BALLAST, NOT THE CHART.

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