US West and East Coast Ocean Freight Rates Rebound After a Decline Amid Middle East Turmoil

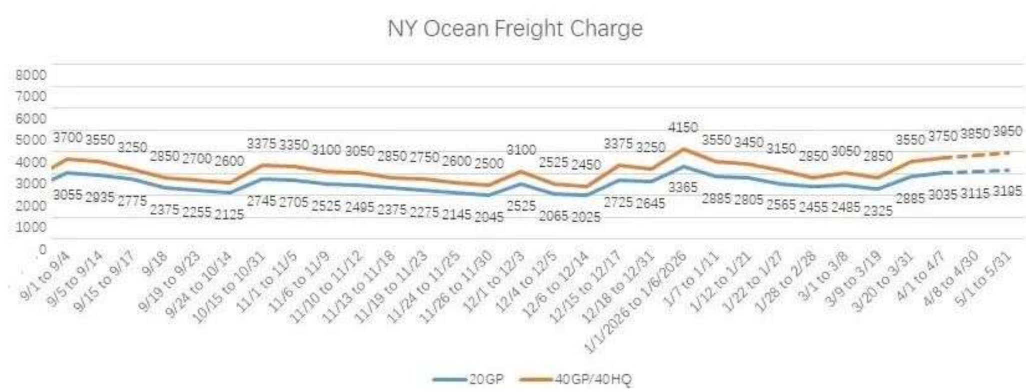
Since March, the ocean shipping market has been impacted by the ongoing tense geopolitical situation. The shipping markets for relevant routes such as the Persian Gulf/Hormuz Strait route and the Red Sea-Suez Canal route have been significantly affected, while other routes have shown divergent trends due to the fundamental supply and demand factors.

In mid-March, the shipping demand for the North American route grew sluggishly, and the spot market freight rates declined. Among them, the freight rate from Shanghai to the US West Coast dropped to USD 2015/FEU, and the freight rate from Shanghai to the US East Coast fell to USD 2850/FEU, with a price difference of USD 735 between the two. From late March to April, driven by the Hormuz Strait crisis and carriers' General Rate Increase (GRI), the freight rates for the North American route rebounded after the decline. The latest data as of April 1 shows that the spot freight rate for the US West Coast route rose by 2% to USD 2715/FEU, and the spot freight rate for the US East Coast route increased by 6% to USD 3750/FEU.

US West Coast Route (Shanghai/Ningbo -- Long Beach/Los Angeles)

The US West Coast route (Shanghai/Ningbo -- Long Beach/Los Angeles) fluctuated around the Spring Festival. It rebounded to USD 3265/FEU in early January 2026, supported by pre-holiday stock-up demand. It plummeted to USD 2215/FEU in mid-to-late January due to the post-holiday demand slump, and fluctuated at a low level of USD 2000-2400/FEU in February. Geopolitical conflicts drove up the rates in March and April. After hitting a low of USD 2015/FEU in early March, the rate rebounded. From late March to early April, affected by the Hormuz Strait crisis in the Middle East, carriers implemented GRI. In early April, the quoted price for 40GP/40HQ stood at USD 2715/FEU and around USD 2215/FEU for 20GP, an increase of about 34% compared with the low in early March. Freight rates are extremely sensitive to geopolitics; carriers' sail suspensions and space controls as well as geopolitical risk premiums have become the main drivers of the price hike, yet the demand side support is weak, and the actual transaction prices are generally lower than the announced target increases.

US East Coast Route (Shanghai/Ningbo - New York)



The ocean freight rates for the US East Coast route in 2026 presented a pattern of "peaking and declining, then rising driven by geopolitics". In early January, pre-Spring Festival stock-up demand pushed the freight rate to a peak of USD 4150/FEU. It hit a low of USD 2850/FEU in the off-season in February. In March, affected by the Hormuz Strait crisis, carriers resumed the Cape of Good Hope diversion, and the capacity contraction drove the freight rate to rebound. After the implementation of GRI in early April, the rate reached USD 3750/FEU, an increase of 31% from the March low, but still lower than the January peak.

Overall, the freight rates for the US East Coast are 35-40% higher than those for the US West Coast. The price increase in April mainly relies on geopolitical risks and carriers' space controls, with limited improvement in end-user demand.

Against this backdrop, enterprises have seen a significant rise in sensitivity to logistics costs, and flexible and efficient supply chain solutions have become the key to breaking the deadlock. Ingredients Online Shanghai provides LCL (Less than Container Load) shipping services for platform sellers with shipments. After the goods are consolidated at the transit warehouse in Shanghai, they depart directly from Yangshan Port to the

United States. Meanwhile, the company offers real-time full-process logistics tracking, helping sellers keep abreast of cargo dynamics at any time and escorting their business with reliable services.