

Rail Shipper 101

Navigating Rail Logistics: Mastering the Essentials

May 19, 2025 Plaza San Antonio Hotel & Spa

NCTA
commtrex



Space is limited;
register early!

Join us for “Rail Shipper 101,” a one-day course sponsored by NCTA and Commtrex, tailored to equip young executives and emerging leaders in transportation and logistics with a solid foundation in rail logistics. As the commodity shipping sector evolves with new leadership and groundbreaking technologies like Artificial Intelligence reshaping demand forecasting, route planning, and pricing strategies, this program offers a perfect blend of general insights and specialized sessions to empower attendees to navigate the complexities of rail shipping with confidence.

Who Should Attend

This course is ideal for emerging leaders in the transportation and logistics industry. Whether your focus is operational logistics or commercial strategy, you’ll gain the skills needed to excel in your role.

“Rail Shipper 101” will be held on May 19, 2025, at the Plaza San Antonio Hotel & Spa. Open to all industry professionals—NCTA membership is not required. Attendees can also request Professional Development Hours (PDH).

Note that the course has been conveniently timed and located to allow participants to also attend either NCTA’s [Spring Conference](#) or its [Operations & Maintenance Conference](#). Attendance at either of those events requires separate registration at the preceding links.

REGISTER HERE



**THE COURSE
FEE IS \$599**

Contact Melinda Canter
with questions.
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Phone: (720) 227-1049

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COURSE SCHEDULE

MORNING SESSION (GENERAL LOGISTICS 101 FOR ALL ATTENDEES)

8:30 AM – 9:15 AM

Logistics 101: Foundations of Transportation in the Mining Sector

- Overview of transportation modes and their role in commodity shipping.
- Rail transportation basics: types of railcars, freight movement, and industry terminology.
- Integration of trucking, intermodal, and warehousing into mining logistics.

9:15 AM – 10:00 AM

Railroading 101: Understanding the North American Rail Network

- Fundamentals of rail infrastructure: yards, tracks, and service networks.
- Key stakeholders: railroads, shippers, and third-party service providers.
- How railroads prioritize traffic and allocate capacity.

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM

Break

10:15 AM – 11:00 AM

Technology and Artificial Intelligence in Logistics

- Emerging technologies in the transportation and logistics sector.
- Role of AI in logistics optimization: forecasting demand, route planning, and pricing analysis.
- Real-world examples: AI-powered tools for railcar tracking, predictive maintenance, and cost optimization.
- Leveraging big data for actionable insights in mining logistics.

11:00 AM – 11:45 AM

Transloading and Warehousing Essentials

- Transloading: What it is and why it's critical for mining logistics.
- Best practices for managing warehousing and outdoor storage.
- Real-world examples of efficient transloading and storage solutions.

11:45 AM – 12:30 PM

Optimizing Delivered Costs Across All Modes

- Total transportation cost analysis: Rail vs. truck vs. intermodal.
- Tools and strategies for cost optimization.
- Case study: Reducing delivered costs for mining commodities.

12:30 PM – 1:15 PM

Working Lunch



AFTERNOON SESSION: TWO SEPARATE TRACKS

Track 1: Operational Logistics for Fleet and Infrastructure Management

12:30 PM – 1:15 PM

Railcar Maintenance and Fleet Optimization

- Key maintenance requirements for railcars.
- Common challenges and solutions for fleet upkeep.
- Managing costs and improving uptime through preventative maintenance.

1:15 PM – 2:00 PM

Rail Engineering and Track Maintenance

- Basics of track infrastructure and engineering for mining operations.
- Capacity planning and loading/unloading infrastructure.
- Collaborative approaches to improve efficiency and reduce downtime.

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Break

2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

Railcar Storage Strategies

- Short-term vs. long-term storage solutions.
- Understanding storage costs and compliance requirements.
- Best practices for managing storage during market shifts.

3:00 PM – 3:45 PM

Rail Fleet Lifecycle Management

- Evaluating when to lease, buy, or retire railcars.
- Long-term planning for fleet expansion or contraction.
- Metrics and KPIs for managing fleet performance.

Track 2: Commercial Logistics for Business and Strategy Management

12:30 PM – 1:15 PM

Negotiating Freight Rates and Contracts

- Freight rate structures and influencing factors.
- Strategies for negotiating favorable rail freight contracts.
- Identifying and evaluating optimal lanes for pricing.

1:15 PM – 2:00 PM

Railcar Leasing and Procurement

- Types of railcar leases (full-service, net, bare).
- Selecting the right lease structure for your business.
- Managing lease contracts and ensuring flexibility.

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Break

2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

Transloading, Warehousing, and Outdoor Storage

- Identifying the best transloading facilities for your supply chain.
- Managing warehousing costs and optimizing storage solutions.
- Outdoor storage considerations and environmental factors.

3:00 PM – 3:45 PM

Data Monetization and Advanced Logistics Strategy

- Leveraging data to identify trends and opportunities.
- Utilizing tools to enhance data visualization.
- Integrating technology to enhance logistics decision-making.

3:45 PM – 4:30 PM

Rejoining as a Group: Wrap-Up and Q&A

Key takeaways from each track.

Open forum for questions with instructors from both tracks.

Resources for continued learning and next steps.

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Networking Reception (jointly held with attendees of NCTA's Spring and O&M Conferences)



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MEET THE INSTRUCTORS



Richard Kloster

President and Founder of Integrity Rail Partners

Richard Kloster is the President and Founder of Integrity Rail Partners, Inc., a private transportation consulting company that provides strategic consulting services to the rail equipment and railroad industries in December 2019.

IRP supports its operating and investor clients by providing insight and analysis for the purposes of strategic planning, investment decisions, acquisitions, and many commercial activities, focusing on the areas of market research, market development, pricing, marketing, demand forecasting, portfolio and asset management, strategic planning, product management, business development, and operations.

Dick has an extensive background in market research, market development, pricing, marketing, demand forecasting, asset management, strategic planning, product management, business development, operations, and sales. He is primarily engaged in the analysis and forecasting of the rail equipment supply chain. He has been forecasting the rail freight and rail equipment markets for over twenty years for a variety of clients. His insight and analysis are used by operating companies and investors for the purposes of strategic planning, investment decisions, acquisitions, and many commercial activities.

Prior to this, Dick was with AllTranstek, LLC, the industry's leading rail car fleet management company, as SVP and Chief Commercial Officer; was a founding member of the FTR Consulting Group, an affiliate of FTR Intel; with GE Railcar as Vice President Business Develop and Sr. Portfolio Manager; and earlier, several Class 1 and shortline railroads in operational and commercial roles. Dick has an MA from the University of Alabama and a BS from Northern Illinois University; is an executive board member of the National Industrial Transportation League (NITL), a board member of the Railway Supply Institute, has served on several other industry committees and organizations, is a frequent industry presenter, and holds 3 patents for rail car innovations.

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MEET THE INSTRUCTORS



Tomeka Watson Bryant

General Manager

New Orleans Public Belt Railroad

Tomeka Watson Bryant serves as the General Manager of the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad, where she directs daily operations of the New Orleans Public Belt, including railroad strategy, safety strategy and process improvement initiatives. Watson Bryant, a second-generation railroader, brings both operations and commercial experience in the railroad industry to lead NOPB, a Class III railroad on the nation's fourth largest rail gateway that connects with six Class I railroads and serves Port NOLA and local industry.

Most recently, Watson Bryant served as Marketing and Sales Manager for the Public Belt and pioneered a successful safety program. Her professional background includes Class 1 railroad experience, launching her career as a Trainmaster for both CSX and NOPB. She holds a Master's in Business Administration from Pfeiffer University, and a B.S. in Exercise Science from Elon University.



MEET THE INSTRUCTORS



Martin Lew

Founder and CEO
Commtrex

Mr. Martin Lew is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Commtrex, the largest tech-enabled rail logistics platform with managed services, empowering shippers to find and connect with transloaders, storage locations, warehouses, lessors, and a wide range of service providers.

Under Lew's leadership, Commtrex has partnered with all seven Class I Railroads and has grown to over 3,000 active members, many of whom are commodity shippers moving freight by rail across North America. Commtrex has been named to the FreightWaves Freight Tech 100, the Logistics Tech Outlook Top 10 Freight Management Companies, a participant in the Plug & Play Supply Chain Innovation Program, a finalist in with the BSGA Shark Tank Competition, and one of the 10 Most Promising Digital Companies at the Texas Digital Summit.

Prior to Commtrex, Mr. Lew was the Head of Global Sales and Origination for Mabanft Coal Trading, Vice President and Head of Origination for JP Morgan's Coal and Environmental Markets Group, Associate for the North American Coal and Emissions Trading Desk at Bear Stearns, and CEO of Equate Systems. Mr. Lew holds a Juris Doctorate from Boston College Law School, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree with majors in Communications and Political Science from the University of Southern California.

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