

Army Transportation Command

Customer and Carrier Advisory

January 30, 2026

CA-26-01-30/0008

Subject: Updated Requirements for Hazards of Electromagnetic Radiation of Ordnance (HERO) and Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit (TEU) Shipments via Rail.

Purpose: To provide updated guidance to shippers/carriers on the movement of TEU and HERO shipments via rail. The advisory CA 25 12 01 0071 has been rescinded and to be replaced by this one.

Be Advised: In the 1990s, the Army procured DODX 48000-series container flatcars (surplus commercial railcars) to support rapid deployment of ammunition during contingency operations. Originally built in the 1970s, these cars began reaching their 50-year, age-mandated retirements in 2023 and will not be replaced.

Effective immediately and until further notice, the following DODX railcars are prohibited from use in any movements involving HERO or ammunition of any kind:

Prohibited DODX Railcars

- All DODX 40-series cars
- All DODX 41-series cars
- All DODX 42-series cars
- The following DODX 48-series cars only:
 - 48783
 - 48811
 - 48843
 - 48913
 - 48945
 - 48958
 - 48989

Historically, HERO movements loaded by rail have accounted for less than 4% of the average 22,000 carloads shipped annually over the past six years. Of these, movements conducted exclusively on DODX chain flatcars represent less than 0.0123% of total shipments. The Defense Freight Rail Interchange Fleet (DFRIF), consisting of approximately 1,500 commercial railcars, continues to handle most HERO movements. Therefore, restricting the use of DODX cars is not expected to create supply challenges.

There are more than 122,000 commercial well units available, each capable of carrying two TEUs. Depending on design, a single well car contains between one and five individual well units. Altogether, commercial well cars provide capacity for over 240,000 TEUs.

Between 2019 and 2021, 500 single-unit well cars were redesignated as "TPEX", marking them available for military service. Each of these cars carries two TEUs, giving the group a combined capacity of 1,000 TEUs, nearly 80% of the capacity lost with the retirement of the DODX 48000-series cars. Unlike the DODX cars, which were limited to 40,000 pounds per container, the TPEX cars can handle containers up to the standard 52,000-pound limit.

In addition to the 500 'TPEX' single-unit well cars dedicated to military use, commercial railroads also supplement ammunition trains with other well car types available for use. These additional well car types include single-unit, three-unit, and five-unit well car varieties, all capable of carrying two TEUs per well unit.

TEU Loading Requirements

- Double-stacking of TEUs on well cars is prohibited.
- Single TEUs may not be transported via well cars alone; all TEUs shipped via well cars must be mated (paired).
- TEUs may be transported via chain-flat TPDX cars only when end-opening containers are placed door-to-door.
- Side-opening containers loaded with Sensitive Items (SI) must be shipped via well cars.
- Side-opening containers carrying non-SI cargo may be shipped via chain-flat cars, though this is not recommended.

POC:

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Expiration: N/A

Category: Rail