



## Moving Special Project Cargo – When a Container Won't Due

We have all seen them on the road or around the city. I'm talking about big, often massively heavy or oversized loads travelling slowly down the roadway – usually trailed by a line of cars. Chances are those items are special project cargo. Shipments that don't fit neatly into standard shipping containers, but instead require specialized handling, equipment and permits due to weight, dimensions or simply the unique properties of the goods are defined as "Special Project Cargo". Moving this type of cargo requires literally going outside the box.

It may be ultra-large, heavy or even high-value equipment that requires specialized handling. Some examples of this type of shipment are industrial equipment such as: nuclear reactors, turbines, generators, transformers or water turbines.

Special Project Cargo can be any goods that meet the following criteria:



**Overweight:** generally defined as freight that exceeds the weight limits of a standard shipping container. The maximum container weight accepted by ocean carriers varies and state and local departments of transportation have different guidelines for what is allowed to travel on public roadways.

**Oversized:** cargo is any shipment that exceeds equipment weight limitations or the structural tolerances of a standard container or flat rack. Self-propelled vehicles are considered oversized as well as any items that are towable.

**Requires using any of a wide range of special equipment** including: cranes, flat deck or drop deck trailers, heavy-haul tractors and trailers, gantry systems, hydraulic jacks or precision handling equipment for moving delicate instruments.

### Partner for Success

We have asked the question in this space before; **does your freight forwarder offer more than just a good price?** Special project cargo is usually high-value and represents significant capital investment. The right logistics partner must have the knowledge and expertise to help protect that investment.



Before you engage a forwarder to handle your special project cargo **there are some important things to consider**. Is your forwarder:

- Experienced and Professional?
- Financially stable?
- Bonded & Insured?

### **A Roadmap for Success**

Moving special project cargo requires careful planning, sometimes months in advance. There are several steps that must be followed to ensure a successful move.

#### ***Interview***

A good interview works both ways. This is your opportunity to ask questions, including requesting references. The forwarder has an opportunity to fully understand your expectations and ask the questions needed to ensure they formulate a plan that works for the unique requirements of your move. For example:

- What are your timeline and budgetary considerations?
- Are there hazardous materials involved or special governmental permits or petitions that must be secured?
- Will the job require coordination with multiple vendors?

#### ***Planning***

Only after a thorough interview and gathering of information is a plan of action fully developed. Proper planning beforehand means:

- The right equipment and mode of transport is employed for the job. Your forwarder can even offer valuable advice in the design or construction of your equipment. For example recommending final dimensions that will give you more options during transport. That advice may save you time and money later on.
- Acquire the necessary permits. Federal, state and local entities may require special permits well in advance. Better to make those arrangements beforehand than be hit with thousands of dollars in fees or fines later on.
- Mitigate risk and potential losses and meet YOUR timeline for delivery.



## **Vantec Hitachi Transport System (USA), Inc.**

21061 S. WESTERN AVE. SUITE 300 TORRANCE, CA 90501 TEL: (310) 787-3420 FAX: (310) 787-8863

### ***Execute your Shipment Successfully***

In order to deliver a trouble-free shipment of your special project cargo your provider must be able to pull together the planning and preparation and execute the movement successfully.

Consideration and attention should be given to:

- All safety precautions for personnel involved
- Communicate throughout the entire process
- Attend to the details – large and small

As a group company of Hitachi Transport Systems we understand the unique requirements of special cargo moves. The following is just one example of **what is possible with teamwork, careful planning and precise execution.**

### **Transportation of Large-Scale Power Generation Equipment**

It is not uncommon for special project cargo to require creative solutions. A great example can be seen in this inland construction project of a thermal power plant on the Missouri River in the United States. Access to the construction site was limited so moving the ultra-heavy components onsite was a major challenge. After exploring the options, a private cargo unloading dock was constructed on the banks of the Missouri River in the vicinity of the power plant.



This creative solution allowed for an increase in the unit size of the transported items and played a big role in the success of the project because it reduced the number of items that needed to be broken up into smaller parts. As a result, the transportation project time-frame was greatly reduced and the customer realized a significant reduction in the overall power plant



---

**Vantec Hitachi Transport System (USA), Inc.**

21061 S. WESTERN AVE. SUITE 300 TORRANCE, CA 90501 TEL: (310) 787-3420 FAX: (310) 787-8863

construction costs. The initial construction costs of the temporary quay were more than offset by the overall cost-efficiency savings seen by the client.

As part of our feasibility study of this quay construction approach, careful consideration was given to checking the water levels and closing period of the Missouri River, as well as the procedure for acquiring a construction permit. We also maintained close contact with local governments and the US Army Corp of Engineers to seek licensing agreements, as well as environmental protection groups to seek advance approval for the project.

There is more to moving specialized shipments of ultra-heavy or oversized goods than you might think. However, with proper communication, planning and execution almost anything is possible.

[View our \*Smart Source\* blog library.](#)