



# Prioritizing partials: taking midsize freight from overlooked to always booked

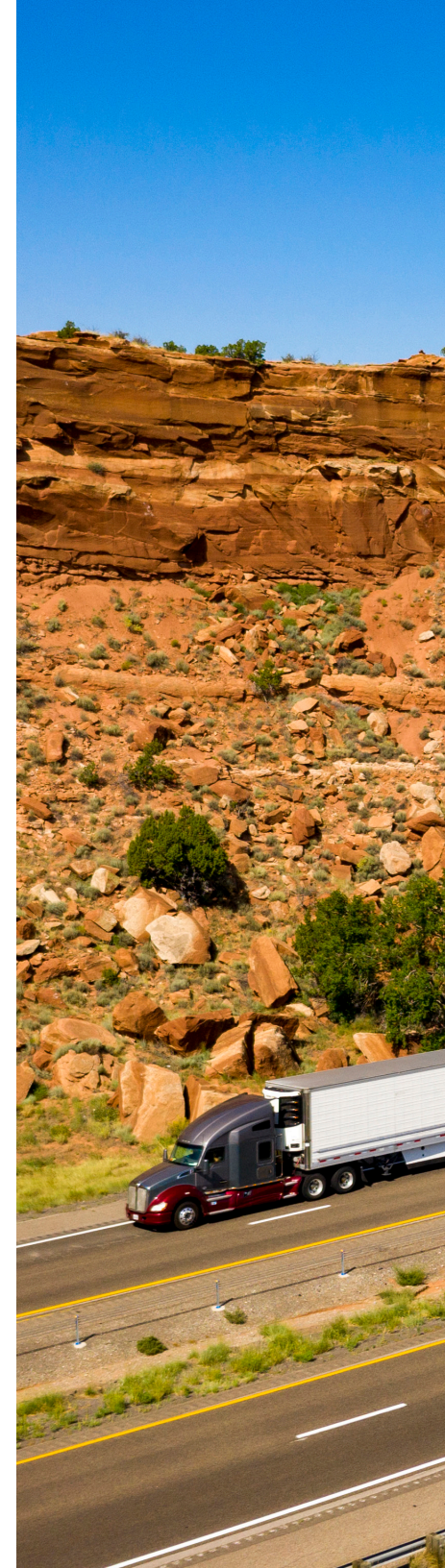
The shipping industry overlooks partials more than any other load size, but a new service option begs to differ.

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# The problem

Ever find yourself choosing between price, service quality, and speed when shipping 10-28 linear feet of freight? You're not alone.

Too often, traditional shipping methods force shippers to choose between these three business needs, all of which are crucial to stay competitive in today's freight market.

Historically, shippers with partials and volume freight have had three types of service to choose from:

**Partial truckload (PTL)**

**Volume less-than truckload (VLTL)**

**Truckload (TL)**

Shippers moving freight 10-28 linear feet see a price/service trade-off between these shipping modes. Shippers:

- Risk longer transit times by moving partials through a clunky network of consolidators.
- Book VLT service that might damage shipments, deliver late, or prioritize smaller loads in tight markets. Plus, rates of certain lanes skyrocket with limited backhaul availability.
- Buy pricey TL deck space their freight can't fill.

Exacerbating this price/service trade-off are current market conditions, including:

- **Consumer expectations for same-day e-commerce delivery:** The only way for manufacturers and shippers to deliver goods fast is sending freight right away.
- **Plenty of partials to move:** Freight volumes are up 13% since January 2021 due to factors like port bottlenecks, produce season, and sustained e-tail spending.
- **The capacity crunch:** Carriers are rejecting roughly 25% of contracted dry-van loads. Equipment deficits, the trucker shortage, and worker absenteeism aren't helping matters.

Another market condition impacting shippers with partials is less-than truckload (LTL) pricing, which has been slightly more static than that of TL. As a result, shippers who'd normally book TL service for partials have been flooding the LTL system with volume freight.

Many carriers who typically move partials on backhauls at competitive rates have accumulated quite a backlog of freight. As a result, these carriers have become more selective about the lanes they accept volume shipments for or have stopped looking for new business altogether. Carriers are even:

↓ Dropping customers

↑ Increasing rates

↻ Rolling freight over to the next day

Additionally, service providers like freight brokers and third-party logistics (3PL) companies are working around embargoes and skid caps. A little about each:

- **Embargoes:** In the last two months, Flock Freight has seen embargoes range from a few terminals to entire states to whole regions, including:
  - Denver, CO
  - Fresno, CA
  - Oregon
  - Idaho
  - Sacramento, CA
  - San Diego, CA
  - Washington
- **Skid caps:** Depending on capacity, some carriers are setting limits on the number of pallets they'll pick up from certain terminals.

Though embargoes and skid caps are temporary, they've created — at best — an inconsistent shipping experience.

So, how can shippers with freight 10-28 linear feet navigate current market conditions and the price/service trade-off of traditional shipping modes? How can they avoid the biggest pains of shipping partials? The answer lies in the industry's newest mode: shared truckload (STL).

## The industry's newest mode: shared truckload (STL)

Supply chains that leverage innovative solutions like STL will find new ways to ship freight without delay and meet rising consumer expectations.

Before we explain why shared truckload is the surest bet for affordable, reliable partial shipping, let's dive into the other options shippers have for 10-28 linear feet of freight.

(We won't discuss TL since — in the context of partials — it wastes too much space, money, and fuel for us to consider it a viable solution.)

# Types of truckload

## Partial truckload

For the most part, partials move via freight consolidators (asset-light LTL carriers) that specialize in specific regions. To book transportation for freight 10-28 linear feet, shippers who need a national reach and desire cost savings tend to get quotes from many consolidators or hire brokers with large networks. This mode doesn't require freight classification and sometimes separates cargo that's part of the same shipment.

### The benefits of partial truckload

- ✓ Fewer stops than VLTL
- ✓ No freight-class requirement (less chance of incurring accessorials)

### The downsides of partial truckload

- ✗ Regional — not national— reach
- ✗ Potential for long transit times
- ✗ Potential for damage and loss
- ✗ Potential for split-up shipments

The consolidation process causes the primary drawbacks of this mode. Because carriers match multiple partials at warehouses after pickup, one load's delivery transit doesn't begin until a facility has accumulated enough freight to top off a whole truck. As a result, partials that don't fill a truck to capacity wait at warehouses before delivery transit begins. Whether loads idle at consolidation facilities or jump on a truck immediately, the amount of handling leads to undue damage.

Additionally, the potential for scattered loads means freight in the same shipment might arrive at different times.

**The difficulties of delivering freight on time and intact are enough to make any shipper rethink the decision to use this mode.**

Ultimately, both of these challenges make supply chains less efficient, slowing down delivery and threatening customer satisfaction.

## Volume less than truckload

Volume less-than truckload is an alternative for shippers with 10-28 linear feet of freight. VLTL shipments move through the LTL hub-and-spoke system, zigzagging between several trucks and terminals. This amount of handling makes the hub-and-spoke network most efficient for LTL shipments, not VLTL ones. As a result, the LTL system prioritizes smaller freight over larger freight, dropping VLTL shipments in tight markets.

### The benefits of VLTL

✓ Nationwide reach

### The downsides of VLTL

- ✗ Potential for delays and next-day rollovers in tight markets
- ✗ Relatively high rates of damage and loss
- ✗ Potential for split-up shipments
- ✗ More complex shipment visibility and tracking
- ✗ Freight-class requirement (potentially more accessorials)
- ✗ High pricing on certain lanes



Another issue with VLTL is the all-too-common occurrence of hub-and-spoke facilities leaving volume freight in the lurch, particularly in tight markets.

If deciding whether to move a trailer with 30 shipments of high-revenue freight or a 20-foot load with just two orders, LTL carriers will choose the first option for a couple of reasons:

- The first option keeps more — rather than fewer — customers happy.
- Large, bulky shipments aren't the hub-and-spoke system's optimal type of freight.

When the hub-and-spoke system overflows with smalls shipments, it squeezes out shippers in the midsize category, who, in turn, opt to book other modes.

The result? Unpredictable transit times for VLTL freight.

Lastly, like LTL shipments, VLTL shipments incur higher risk of damage, loss, and delay than freight moving via other modes. Other downsides of VLTL take the form of ambiguous tracking updates and the potential for accessorials. These disadvantages prevent us from recommending VLTL for partial shipping.





## The best option for partials: shared truckload

Shared truckload freight moves directly from its pickup location to its destination — without passing through hubs or terminals. Unlike the other modes, shared truckload enables several shippers to share trailer space in one multi-stop full truckload. With shared truckload, shipments that are traveling on a similar route move on the same truck.

**Shared truckload applies the concept of carpooling to shipping, optimizing truck space, loading freight in last-in, first-out (LIFO) order to minimize handling, and keeping shipments in the same load together.**

FlockDirect is the freight industry's first and only shared truckload solution. When shippers book FlockDirect, they pay for just the space their freight needs and not a cent more. Because FlockDirect shippers choose when their freight picks up and delivers, they can send cargo right away and trust it to arrive on time, in full.

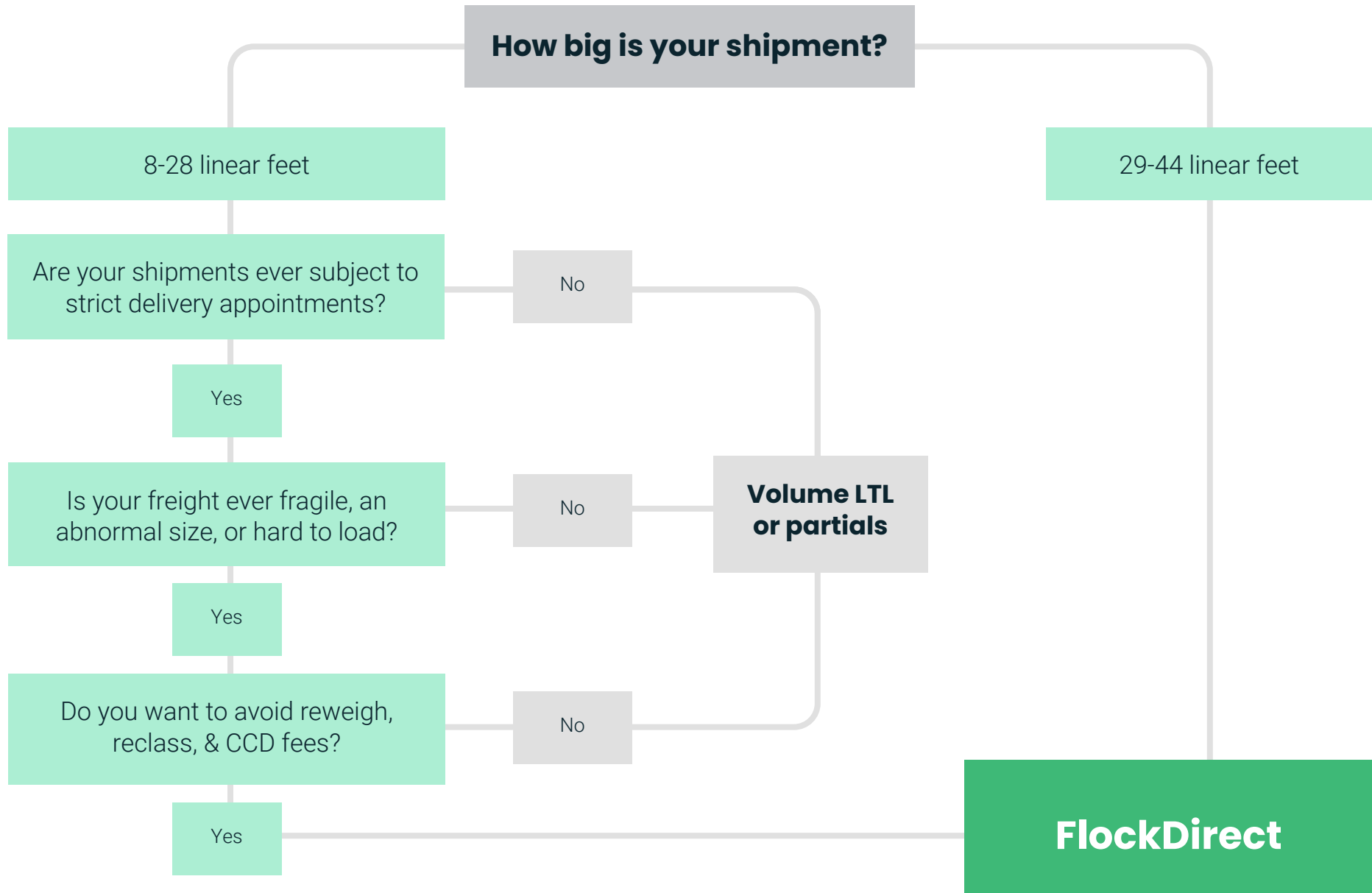
FlockDirect shippers can count on capacity, too. Because carriers earn more per mile on shared truckloads, FlockDirect shipments are more attractive than VLT and partial loads. Plus, Flock Freight has thousands of trusted carriers in our network.

Ultimately, shared truckload gives shippers what they need: efficient and reliable shipping for less. This mode drives efficiency within supply chains by allowing shippers to send goods immediately after production and keep customers happy.

### The benefits of shared truckload:

- Nationwide reach
- Direct, hubless transit
- Minimal handling and low risk of damage
- Zero risk of split-up shipments
- No freight-class requirement (less chance of incurring accessorial)
- Easy, accurate shipment tracking
- Predictable delivery windows
- Cost savings

## When is FlockDirect the right option for your partial and volume LTL freight?





## Don't let load size dictate price, service quality or speed

In conclusion, shared truckload is the most reliable and cost-efficient partial shipping service on the market. In a speed-focused freight landscape that shows no signs of slowing down, Flock Freight's shared truckload solution, FlockDirect, is the key to managing the price/service trade-off of the PTL, VLTL, and TL shipping modes.

**Next time you find yourself choosing between consolidators and the hub-and-spoke system, find a service provider who believes you should never sacrifice price, service quality, or speed and remember your other option: **shared truckload**.**



Mode comparison chart:

	PTL	VLTL	STL
Nationwide reach	✗	✓	✓
Direct, hubless transport	✗	✗	✓
Relatively low risk of damage	✗	✗	✓
No load separation	✗	✗	✓
Predictable delivery windows	✗	✗	✓
Reduced risk of incurring accessorials	✓	✗	✓







Flock Freight is a technology company that's reducing waste and inefficiency by reinventing the supply chain. First to market with advanced algorithms that enable supply chain optimization by pooling shipments, Flock Freight creates a new standard of service for shippers, increases revenue for carriers, and eliminates the impact of carbon emissions through shared truckload shipping.

    [flockfreight.com](https://flockfreight.com)