

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This document lists questions and answers for the AAR Embargo/OPSL Notes and Permit System (AAR Embargo System). The questions are divided into the following categories: Embargoes, Permits, and OPSL Notes. For additional information, refer to the [AAR Embargo System](#) web page.

Embargoes

When can I issue an embargo?

Please refer to AAR Circular TD-1, Section II Prohibitions. The Circular does not establish standards for determining whether or not an embargo is lawful or unlawful. However, the party placing the embargo is responsible for compliance with applicable laws or regulations.

Can all railroads issue an embargo?

Yes, all railroads that are signatories to the Association of American Railroads Car Service and Car Hire Agreement (See AAR Circular OT-10) have the authority to issue embargoes. Before a railroad can issue an embargo through the AAR Embargo System, they must assign an Embargo Officer through Railinc's Single Sign-On (SSO) Application.

Can a non-railroad issue an embargo?

No. Only railroads may issue an embargo, though railroads will work with customers to regulate traffic in and out of their facility for such reasons as accumulation, track damage, etc. Please note, under the provisions of AAR TD-1 Circular, a water carrier may also issue an embargo. If a water carrier listed in the AAR Circular OT-10 wishes to issue an embargo, it would need to have a valid Standard Carrier Alpha Code (SCAC) in order to do so. For help with this contact Railinc Customer Support at 1-800-544-7245 or email csc@railinc.com.

How long can an embargo be in effect?

Embargoes are temporary in nature and are initially created with an expiration date of one year from the issue/effective date. It is possible to re-issue embargoes after one year, but this should not be considered a long term solution based on the cause of the embargo. For situations that require a longer standing solution, an OPSL Note might be more appropriate.

When can I make my embargo effective immediately?

The TD-1 Circular in Section IV – Effective Date – outlines the rules around this. But generally embargoes that are for emergency type situations (flooding, bridge or track out, etc.) can be set up to be Effective Immediately. In such circumstances, the Embargo Officer submitting the embargo can check the Effective Immediately check box. Embargoes issued for Congestion/Accumulation should not be set to Effective Immediately.

Can I embargo all stations on my railroad by state?

Yes, an Embargo Officer has the ability to Embargo By State. This allows for maximum coverage of an embargo with fewer data entry steps. When the Embargo Officer is specifying the Geography information for an embargo, the 'Include These Locations' radio button should be selected allowing the user to define the locations that should be embargoed. The **STATE** option should be selected from the drop down menu next to the 'From' or 'To' text areas to indicate that State values will be entered. A state value can be entered allowing the Embargo Officer to quickly refer to all of the stations for their road within the given state to be embargoed.

Is an Operating Station Notice (OSN) an embargo?

The only difference between an embargo and an Operating Station Notice (OSN) is that an OSN is not subject to the Tier II EDI 824 edit process. No waybills will be matched against the OSN. The only notification to others will be via the email subscription process.

What is a Serving Switch Handling Carrier embargo?

The former Companion Embargo concept has been replaced with Serving Switch Handling Carrier functionality. This new functionality allows for Carrier-to-Carrier collaboration on embargo creation. This reduces the need for companion embargoes and reduces the overall number of embargoes. When the originating road issues an embargo that they want other carriers to participate in, the roadmarks for each of those roads is entered into the Participating Roads text area. Special instructions for the Participating Roads can be entered into the 'Notes to Participating Roads' text area. When the issuing carrier issues the embargo, an email notification is sent to each of the Participating Roads who have been invited to collaborate on this embargo. Each Participating Road is only allowed to add and remove their own FSAC information; all other details of the embargo are editable only by the origin road.

Can the Issuing Road delete the Serving Switch Handling Carrier from the existing embargo?

Yes, the Issuing Road can edit or amend a Serving Switch Handling Carrier embargo and delete a road listed in the Participating Roads text area.

Can I be notified when an embargo is issued?

Users with a valid Railinc Single Sign On account can subscribe to the AAR Embargo System. The subscription will allow users to receive notification via an email each time an embargo is created, approved, cancelled, amended or expires. Subscriptions are effective for one year. Subscribers will receive an email reminder one week prior to the subscription expiration date for a chance to renew it.

What does 'Bypass Local Waybills' mean?

If a road does not want their local waybills – originating and terminating on one road – that are submitted to Railinc's Forward and Store (F&S) System to be matched against embargoes or OPSP Notes, then this box is checked.

What does 'Tier II Effective Date' mean?

This is the date used to start matching submitted waybills to F&S against an effective embargo or OPSL Note. See Circular TD-1 section IV, Effective Date.

If I check the 'Include Empty Revenue Cars' box, will all empties be caught in the embargo?

If a waybill is submitted to Forward and Store (F&S) with an EDI 417 (where BX07 is E, 1, X and the 'Include Empty Revenue Cars' box is checked) then the application will attempt to match against the Embargo database and embargo the revenue empties. However, if the box is not checked then all empty revenue cars will bypass the edit process and they will not be embargoed.

When should I use the 'Max Car Allowed' option?

The numeric value the Embargo Officer enters in the text box indicates the number of equipment in a unit train that can be shipped without the need to obtain a permit to ship to an embargoed destination. If a unit train contains more than the number of equipment specified in the Max Car field, the train will be subject to the embargo.

What do the AND/OR values mean in the 'Include these Interchanges' section within Geography?

When the 'Include These Interchanges' check box is selected, it allows the Embargo Officer to define the Interchange criteria that will be used when evaluating embargo traffic. This means that when waybills are compared against the embargo, the route will be considered along with the Origin and Destination as criteria to stop traffic. There is a drop down field containing the values 'AND' and 'OR' next to the Interchanges text area. If the 'AND' option has been selected, a waybill must contain the Origin/Destination as specified on the embargo, and must contain the Interchange in its route in order to be stopped by the embargo. If the 'OR' option has been selected, the Origin and Destination do not have to match the embargo criteria, just the Interchange criteria needs to be matched. This means that regardless of the Origin/Destination, if the waybill is destined to pass through the specified interchange, traffic will be stopped by this embargo.

What does the 'Bi-Directional' check box mean within Geography?

When the Bi-Directional check box is selected, it means that that embargo is set up for two-way traffic. When an embargo needs to be set up to stop traffic from 'A' to 'B' and from 'B' to 'A', location 'A' would be entered into the 'From' text area, location 'B' would be entered in the 'To' text area, and the Bi-Directional check box would be selected. If traffic needs to be stopped from and to one location, the location would be entered into the 'From' text area, and the Bi-Directional check box selected.

I need to use a weight that is not listed in the 'Total Weight on Rail' drop down, what should I do?

Choose the 'Other' Option. An additional text box will then be displayed to input a weight other than those offered by default. Weights should always be in pounds and Total Weight on Rail.

What should I do if I cannot locate my customer using the patron CIF lookup by name?

If the patron name is not specified exactly as it is listed in the CIF database, the CIF record will not be returned. To optimize searching capability, the wildcard (*) feature should be used. When searching for a patron by name, specify the first three letters of the patron name, and then append the asterisk (*). This allows the search query to be as flexible as possible so that search results will be optimized.

If searching for the patron is not successful, it is possible that the patron does not exist in the CIF database. If the patron is not present in the CIF database, a request needs to be issued to have the patron added to the CIF database. Please contact CSC for additional instruction.

Will equipment that is not in Umler match an embargo?

If a piece of equipment listed on a waybill is not registered in Umler, the application assumes that equipment is invalid and therefore the waybill is not matched against any embargoes.

Are there any exceptions allowed for embargo weight restricted traffic?

When an embargo officer creates an embargo and specifies weight restrictions, the officer will have the option to specify the exception cars to these weight criteria by specifying the car initial and number. An individual car, a list of cars, or range of cars may be specified in the 'Except these Cars' text area.

Permits

Who can issue or approve a Permit?

Permit officers and administrators can approve embargo permits. Customers can request a permit, or a road can request a permit on behalf of a customer.

What does 'Permits Allowed Per Day' or 'Daily Allowance' mean?

This is the number of permits that the system will allow to be matched or used against a waybill during a 24 hour period. Anything over this number and the system will issue an 824 stating "Permit Limit for the day reached." The railroad embargo or OPSL Notes Permit Officer controls how many permits will be granted to shippers at the time of approval.

How many times can I use a permit?

Once a permit has been associated with a waybill, that permit number may not be used for any other shipment.

Will my shipment be allowed to move to destination if it is subject to more than one embargo and I have a permit?

In cases involving more than one embargo in a waybill route, the Tier II EDI 824 edit process will allow the waybill to pass through if the waybill has a permit for **EACH** matching embargo.

I have a multi-car waybill; how many permits will I need?

A permit for an embargo is issued against a waybill. Only one permit is needed for each waybill that is transmitted via EDI. So regardless of the equipment count within the waybill, the permit applies to the embargo listed on that waybill.

OPSL Notes

Note: For issues related to OPSL Notes, also review the embargo explanations as they are much the same.

Why should I input an OPSL Note and not an embargo?

Embargoes are only temporary in nature – short term – while OPSL Notes are for an indefinite period of time. Before an OPSL Notes Officer can enter a Note into the application, the Note must have been assigned an OPSL Notes number and have been made effective. It also must be published in the Railinc Centralized Station Master (CSM) Industry Reference File. Only OPSL Notes that are operational in nature are intended to be entered into the AAR Embargo System.

What does ‘Information Only OPSL Note’ mean?

See the explanation for Operating Station Notice provided for Embargo OSN. The process works the same as an Embargo Operating Station Notice, with no EDI 824 messages generated.