

# Railway carloadings, September 2022

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## Highlights

In September, Canadian railways transported 30.9 million tonnes of freight, down marginally (-0.3%) from September 2021.

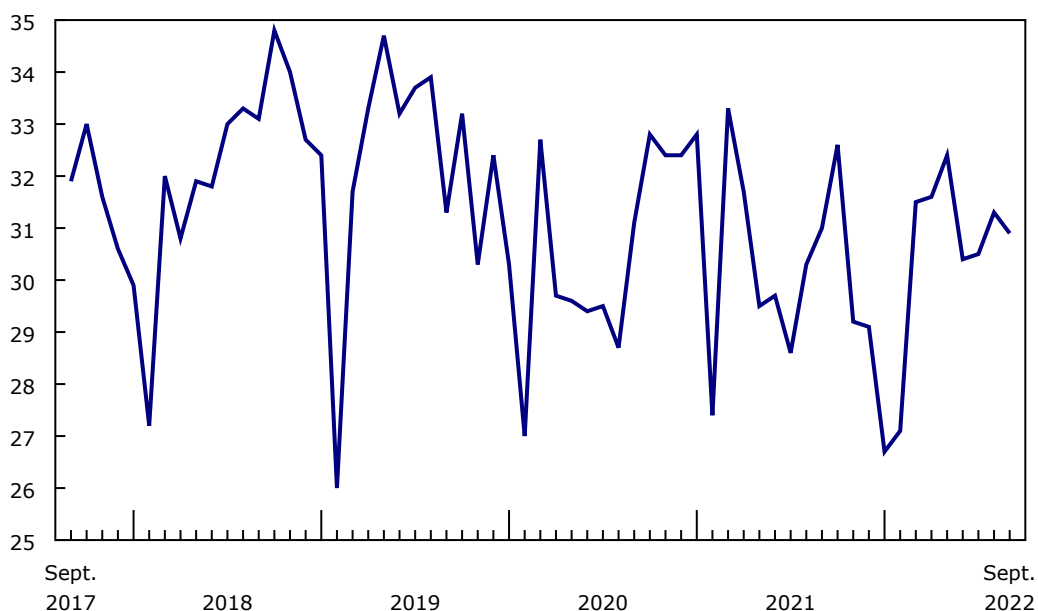
The overall freight volume remained just below the five-year average of 31.7 million tonnes for this month. While shipments of some energy products were down, carloadings of wheat registered strong gains.

To further explore current and historical data in an interactive format, please visit the "[Monthly Railway Carloadings: Interactive Dashboard](#)."

## Chart 1 Railway carloadings, total tonnage

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millions of tonnes



Source(s): Table [23-10-0216-01](#).

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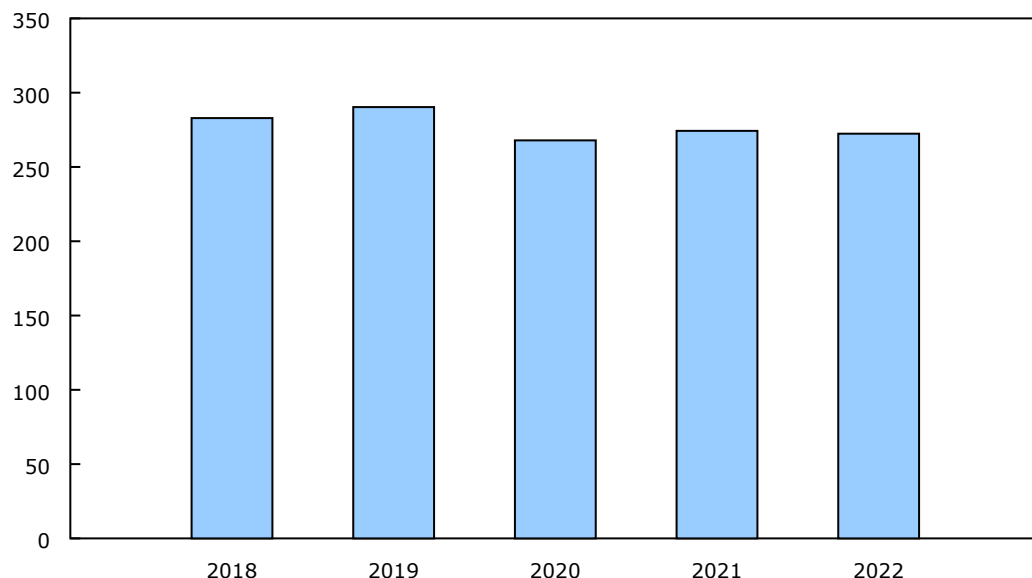
## Cumulative third quarter volume lags

In the nine-month period from January to September 2022, the volume of goods transported by rail amounted to 272.5 million tonnes, slightly lower (-0.7%) than that transported during the same January-to-September period in 2021.



**Chart 2**  
**Railway carloadings, total tonnage, January to September, 2018 to 2022**

millions of tonnes



Source(s): Table 23-10-0216-01.

Freight traffic received from the United States was the main contributor to the small overall decline in tonnage transported in September, as domestic non-intermodal loadings (mainly commodities) increased and intermodal loadings (mainly containers) were more or less flat.

### American freight down

Loadings from connections with American railways posted a year-over-year decline, falling 18.3% to 3.1 million tonnes in September. This was the second monthly decline in 18 months and the lowest volume recorded for the month of September in over five years.

### Wheat carloadings hit eight-year high

Non-intermodal freight loadings in Canada increased for the fifth month in a row, up 2.4% year over year to 24.7 million tonnes, led by a large increase in carloadings of wheat.

With [Canadian wheat production](#) expected to increase significantly in the 2022/2023 crop year because of better growing conditions across the Prairies, carloadings of wheat hit an eight-year high in September, surging by 63.5% (+988 000 tonnes) year over year. This rise came after a long monthly string of year-over-year declines in tonnage resulting from near-drought conditions during the summer of 2021. Indeed, Canada's exports of wheat rebounded in September, as reported earlier in the [Canadian international merchandise trade](#) release.

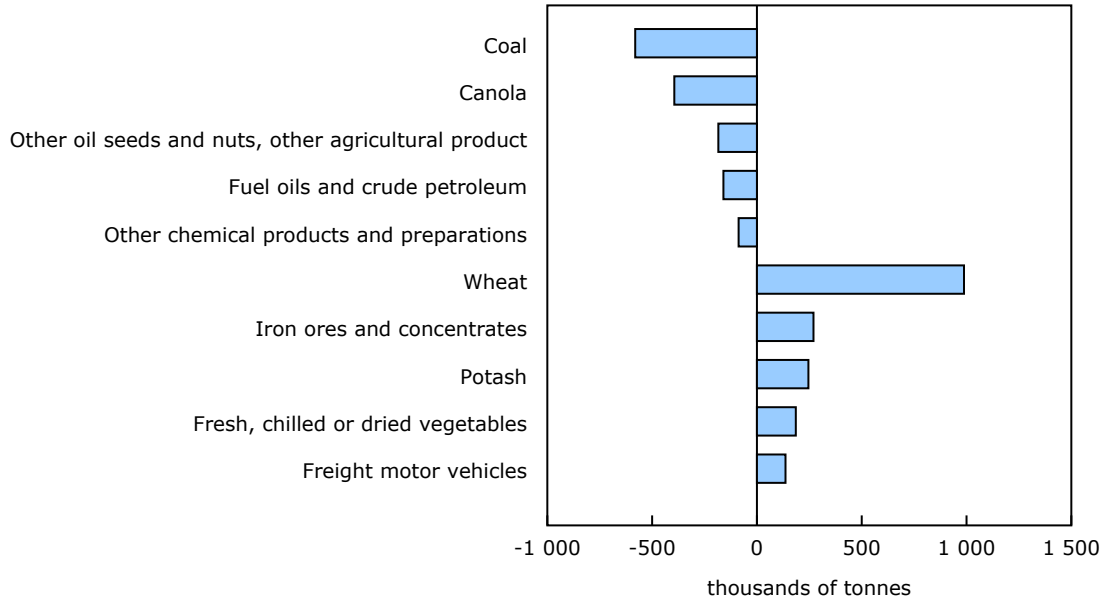
Similarly, loadings of fresh, chilled or dried vegetables posted a healthy year-over-year increase, rising 37.2% (+185 000 tonnes) from September 2021, the largest tonnage increase since September 2020.

In addition, loadings of iron ores and concentrates rose 6.2% (+270 000 tonnes) from September 2021, marking the seventh consecutive year-over-year increase in tonnage.

Loadings of potash have risen year over year for six straight months, up 14.7% (+246 000 tonnes) in September, reflecting strong global demand for Canadian fertilizers.

Finally, loadings of freight motor vehicles, such as tanker-trailers and flatbed trucks, were up by 136 000 tonnes from the same month in 2021—more than double that year's volume.

**Chart 3**  
**Railway carloadings, largest commodity differences, September 2021 to September 2022**



Source(s): Table 23-10-0216-02.

### Coal carloadings down sharply

Growth in non-intermodal freight loadings was moderated by large declines in some energy products. In particular, loadings of coal declined for the first time after seven straight months of substantial year-over-year increases, down sharply by 17.0% (-581 000 tonnes) in September.

This drop coincided with a temporary shutdown in mid-September of coal production at a mine site in British Columbia, as well as a labour dispute at Canada's largest port for moving coal in Vancouver.

Loadings of fuel oil and crude petroleum declined for the fourth month in a row, falling 14.6% (-160 000 tonnes) from the same period a year earlier, following a large decline in August (-26.5%)

Loadings of certain agricultural and food products also declined in September. Carloadings of canola dropped 38.9% (-394 000 tonnes) from September 2021. Likewise, loadings of other oil seeds and nuts and other agricultural products were down 71.8% (-184 000 tonnes) over the same period.

Finally, loadings of other chemical products and preparations fell year over year for the 12th consecutive month in September, down 53.4% (-87 000 tonnes) from the same month a year earlier.

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## Intermodal traffic remains up

In September, domestic intermodal loadings—mainly containers—increased for the third consecutive month, edging up 0.6% year over year to 3.1 million tonnes. Earlier this month, the [Canadian international merchandise trade](#) release reported that Canada's imports of consumer goods experienced a sharp increase of 23.3% year over year in September.

### **Note to readers**

*The Monthly Railway Carloadings Survey collects data on the number of rail cars, tonnage, units and 20-foot equivalent units from railway transporters operating in Canada that provide for-hire freight services.*

*Cargo loadings from Armstrong, Ontario, to the Atlantic Coast are classified to the eastern division (eastern Canada), while loadings from Thunder Bay, Ontario, to the Pacific Coast are classified to the western division (western Canada).*

*Survey data are revised on a monthly basis to reflect new information.*

*The data in this release are not seasonally adjusted.*

*The [Transportation Data and Information Hub](#) provides Canadians with online access to comprehensive statistics and measures on the country's transportation sector.*

**Available tables: table [23-10-0216-01](#).**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2732](#).**

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [infostats@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)) or Media Relations ([statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca)).