

Railway carloadings, July 2024

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Friday, September 20, 2024

Highlights

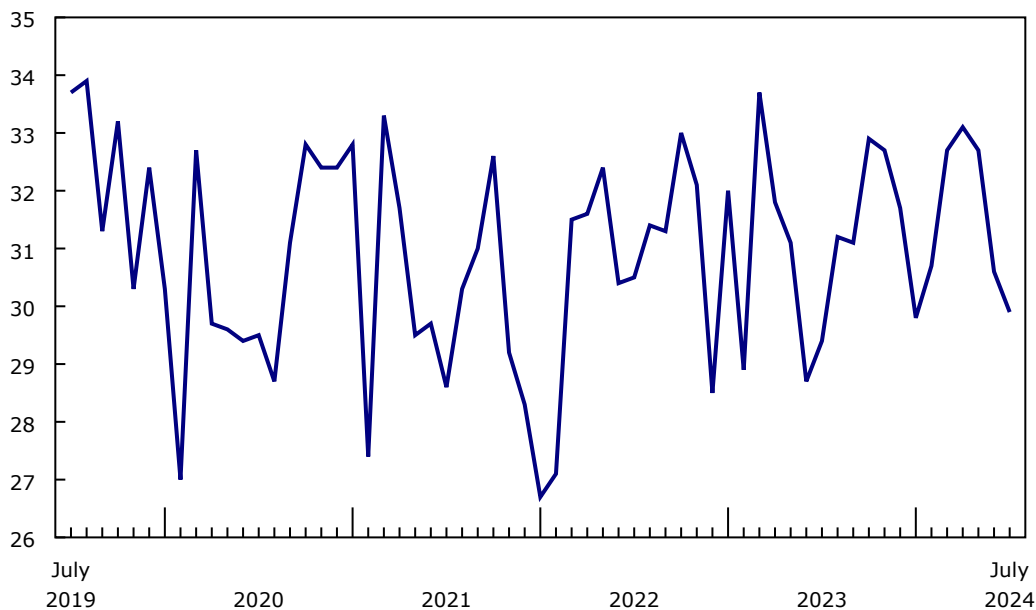
In July, Canadian railways transported 29.9 million tonnes of freight, up 1.6% from July 2023, marking the fourth consecutive month of year-over-year increases.

The overall freight volume was just under the five-year average of 30.3 million tonnes for the month of July. Higher shipments of containers, potash as well as some other commodities more than offset large declines in several commodities, in particular iron ores.

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

Chart 1 Railway carloadings, total tonnage

millions of tonnes



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

The overall increase in total freight carried in July was driven by higher volumes of intermodal traffic (mainly containers) and, to a lesser extent, freight traffic from connections with American railways, offsetting a small decline in non-intermodal loadings (mainly commodities).

Intermodal traffic leads increase

In July, intermodal shipments (mainly containers) originating in Canada led the overall increase in rail freight, rising sharply by 19.2% year over year to 2.8 million tonnes, the largest increase in tonnage in roughly three years.

This growth reflects large year-over-year increases in Canada's exports (+12.4%) and imports (+11.2%) of consumer goods as reported by July's [Canadian international merchandise trade statistics](#).



American freight up

Freight traffic arriving from the United States also contributed to the overall growth in July, increasing 1.7% year over year to 3.8 million tonnes. This was the sixth consecutive month of year-over-year growth in tonnage.

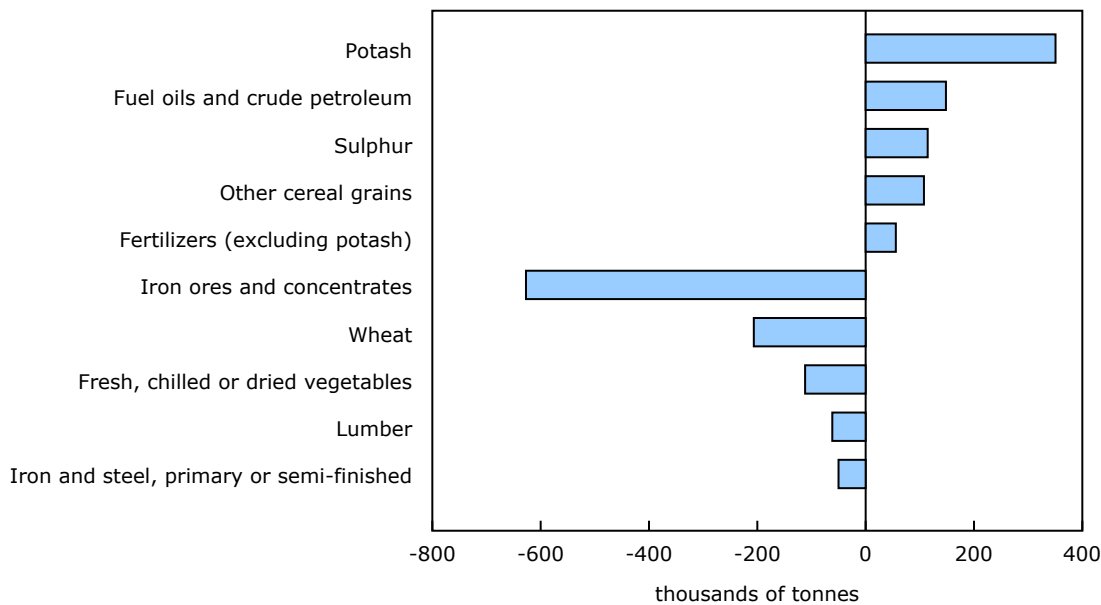
Iron ores and concentrates carloadings down sharply

Non-intermodal freight loadings declined for the first time after three months of year-over-year increases, edging down 0.2% to 23.2 million tonnes in July.

The decline was led by loadings of iron ores and concentrates, down by 12.3% (-627 000 tonnes) in July compared with the same month in 2023. This drop coincided with a temporary suspension of operations at several mine sites near Labrador City in mid-July, due to wildfires.

In July 2024, wildfires burning in Jasper temporarily halted some rail freight movements to and from key ports on the British Columbia Coast. Wheat loadings, for example, posted a year-over-year decrease of 10.3% (-207 000 tonnes) after three consecutive months of increases. Meanwhile, loadings of fresh, chilled, or dried vegetables were down 65.3% (-112 000 tonnes) from July 2023 levels.

Chart 2
Railway carloadings, largest commodity differences, July 2023 to July 2024



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

Potash carloadings up again

Offsetting the declines in non-intermodal loadings in July were large increases in four commodities. Loadings of potash were up 21.0% (+351 000 tonnes) from July 2023, the 12th straight month of increase, reflecting strong global demand for Canadian fertilizers.

Similarly, loadings of fuel oils and crude petroleum—on an upward trend since November 2023—rose 18.5% (+148 000 tonnes) in July 2024 compared with July 2023.

In addition, loadings of sulfur grew 37.3% (+115 000 tonnes) year over year in July 2024, while loadings of other cereal grains were up 35.6% (+108 000 tonnes) year over year.

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Note to readers

In late August 2024, work stoppages affected Canada's two main rail carriers. Statistics Canada has been monitoring the potential impacts of the stoppage, for example, tracking the [Real-time Grain Movement by Rail dashboard](#). The Railway carloadings for August 2024 will be released on October 24, 2024.

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) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).