

EXPEDITED & PARTIAL FREIGHT

The Expedited and Partial Freight Playbook

A field guide for shippers who keep getting stuck with the loads that don't fit a contract. Built for Logistics Managers, Transportation Managers, and operations leaders in food and grocery, automotive, home improvement, and palletized goods.



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How to use this guide

Read it front to back once, then keep sections 06 through 08 on your desk. Those three give you a freight audit, a written playbook, and a scorecard you can run this quarter.

The freight that falls between your contracts

Most freight programs are built around 2 clean modes. Less than truckload for small shipments that share a trailer. Full truckload for big shipments that fill one. You run the bids, sign the contracts, and the lanes that fit those molds tend to run smoothly.

Then there's everything in between. A half load of product with a hard delivery date. A rush replacement while a production line waits on one input. 6 to 12 pallets that ride poorly on LTL and waste space on a truck. These loads are too big for clean LTL and too small for clean truckload, or simply too urgent for either contract to absorb on short notice.

These lanes never went out to bid, because you can't bid an emergency. So they get covered one frantic call at a time, on the spot market, at whatever the day allows. The cost never shows up as its own line on the budget, which is exactly why it grows. This guide gives you a way to find that cost and a plan to close it.



Figure 1 — Your contracts cover the ends of the spectrum. The cost hides in the middle.

4 signs you have a leak

You can usually feel this gap before you can measure it. If 2 or more of these sound familiar, it's costing you real money.

1

Your team spends real time each week calling around for trucks on loads that don't fit a contract.

2

Partials get forced onto LTL and come back with reclass charges, damage, or both.

3

Rush loads get whatever spot rate the day allows, with no range you can predict or plan against.

4

A late or missed appointment on an odd sized load triggered a chargeback in the last quarter.

QUICK GUT CHECK

How many hours did your team spend last week sourcing trucks for loads that didn't fit a bid? Multiply that by a year. That's the size of the problem in time alone.

The anatomy of a spot scramble

When a load lands outside your contracts, the spot market is the default. On a normal day that works. On the day you actually need it, when the load is hot and the clock is short, the market can read the room. The price moves with the day, and the markup tends to climb in proportion to how badly you need the truck.

The invoice is only the visible cost. Here's the rest of it.

COST	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
The markup	A premium that grows the more urgent the load becomes.
The lost hours	Your best people on the phone instead of running the operation.
The chargeback	A missed appointment on an odd sized load, and the penalty behind it.
The stranger risk	A high value load handed to a carrier vetted in 4 minutes.
The reset	Every scramble starts from zero, with no relationship to build on.

Five costs, one invoice line. Only the markup is visible — the other four are absorbed quietly across your team, your appointments, and your risk.

The pre-built capacity model

The shippers who have this handled did one thing differently. They built the capacity before they needed it. When the odd load lands, they're calling a partner who already has the truck and already knows the lane.

Here's what that looks like in practice, and what to demand from any partner.



A real expedited and partial network on call, including sprinter vans, cargo vans, partial box trucks, and expedited team drivers.



Partials handled inside the same expedited motion, so the half load and the hot load are one team's job.



Carriers cleared through a 25-point vetting and freight security standard before they ever touch your product.



A relationship built before the emergency, so the first call is a callback, not a cold start.

The point of building it early is simple. When Friday comes, the playbook is already written, and **there's nothing to improvise at 3:40.**

Visibility and accountability

Most logistics technology sells visibility. A portal, a map, a steady stream of updates. That's useful, and you should expect it. Owning the outcome is a different job.

A status update tells you a load is late. Accountability is the team that saw it coming, moved on it, and already has the answer when you call. The technology shows you what's happening. The team owns what happens next.

VISIBILITY

Shows you what's happening.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Owens what happens next.

THE TSA WAY · TRANSPARENCY, SERVICE, ACCOUNTABILITY

More than 40 years in freight since 1984, a 95 percent on-time pickup and delivery record, dedicated account teams, and their own TMS and client portal to quote, book, and track in real time across truckload, drayage, LTL, and warehousing.

Run a six month freight audit

You can't fix a cost you can't see. This is how to find the spend hiding in your partial and expedited freight. It takes an afternoon.

- 01** Pull 6 months of shipment history from your TMS or accounting export.
- 02** Filter for the loads that didn't move on a contracted LTL or truckload rate.
- 03** Flag anything booked on the spot market, expedited, or as a partial.
- 04** Tag each flagged load with its commodity, lane, and whether it hit its delivery appointment.
- 05** Add up the spend on those loads, then compare it to your clean LTL and truckload averages on similar lanes.
- 06** Note any reclass charges, accessorials, and chargebacks tied to those loads.

The gap between what those loads cost and what your contracted lanes cost is your leak. If pulling and tagging the data is the hard part, that's exactly what a free freight analysis is for.

Monthly freight spend by mode

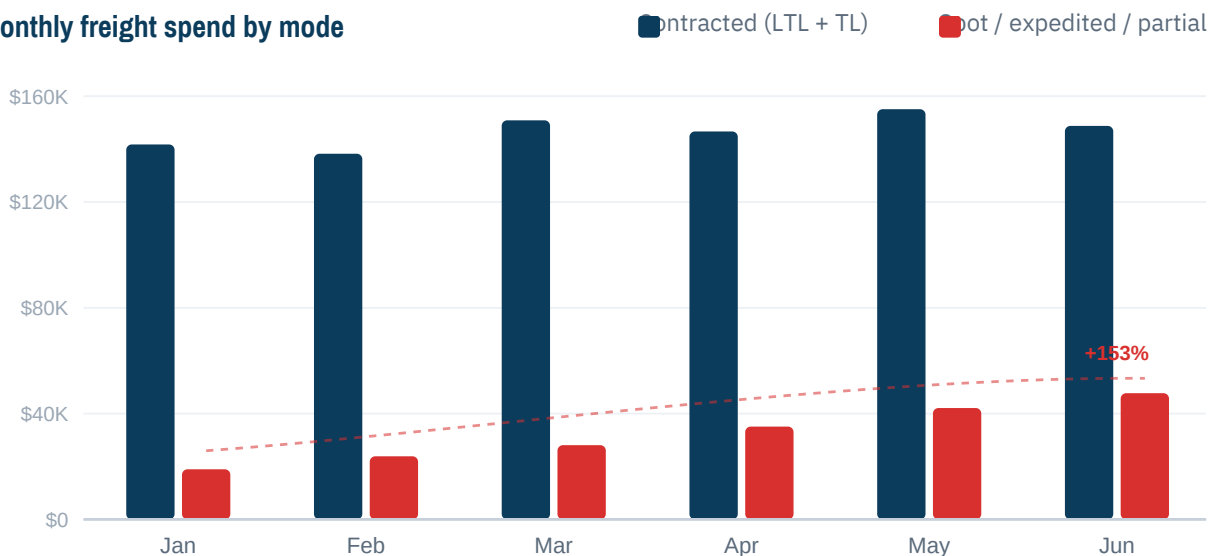


Figure 2 — Illustrative 6-month profile. Contracted spend holds steady while spot, expedited, and partial spend climbs from roughly \$19K to \$48K per month — the leak compounding in plain sight.

Build a Friday proof playbook

Once you know the size of the gap, give your team a plan so the next odd load is routine.

Name the load

Write a one line definition of what counts as a partial or expedited load for your freight.

Set the path

Decide who gets the call and what gets shared, before the load is hot.

Pre-build the capacity

Line up a partner with vetted expedited and partial trucks on call, so sourcing is already done.

Agree on lane range bands

Set a predictable range to plan against, rather than negotiating during the emergency.

Measure it

Track appointment hits, spend versus your bands, and time saved, so the program proves itself.

A partner scorecard

Use this to evaluate any expedited and partial provider, including your current one.

WHAT TO ASK	WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE
Is the capacity pre-built?	Vetted expedited and partial trucks on call before you need them.
How are carriers vetted?	A documented standard, such as a 25-point vetting and freight security check.
Who owns my load?	A dedicated account team, reachable by name, not a ticket queue.
Can I see it in real time?	A TMS and client portal to quote, book, and track.
Is pricing predictable?	Published lane range bands, set before the emergency.
What's the track record?	Years in business and a stated on-time pickup and delivery rate.
One partner or many?	Coverage across truckload, drayage, LTL, and warehousing under one roof.

Your next step

The next half load with a hard date is already on its way to someone's desk. The only real question is whether your team will be calling around for a truck, or calling a partner who is already moving your freight.

TSA starts with a free expedited and partial freight analysis. Share 6 months of your qualifying lanes. We return a clear read on where the spend is leaking and a recommended program for the loads that fall between your contracts. From there a pilot lane runs, and the relationship compounds from real freight.

READY TO SEE YOUR OWN NUMBERS?

Request a lane and review, and we'll set up your free analysis.

Send your qualifying lanes and we'll show you exactly where the spend is leaking — and what a program for the freight between your contracts would recover.

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The TSA Way: **Transparency, Service, Accountability.**

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OF AMERICA

While everyone else is asking for trucks, TSA's already moving your freight.

The TSA Way: Transparency, Service, Accountability. In freight since 1984.



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