Commodity may be handled several times between vessel discharge and final destination. In the absence of pre-planning, assume that the following steps (each involving two handlings̶-loading and offloading) will take place:

* Vessel's hold to dockside
* Dockside to port transit shed
* Transit shed to local warehouse
* Local warehouse to inland destination

With **each** handling:

* Commodity must be tallied and documented.
* The chance of damage or loss increases.
* Overall cost of the logistics operation increases.

To minimize commodity handling in the port:

1. Include the port authority, shipping agent, contracted independent surveyor, and C&F agent in preparing a plan of discharge. For a through bill of lading (TB/L), also discuss and review the discharge plan with the **freight forwarder**. If it is left to the C&F agent alone, the commodity may never move out from the port to the inland destination.
2. Determine how much commodity will be off-loaded from the vessel each day. This will determine the daily transport capacity needed for onward shipment.
3. Determine how many **shifts** of stevedores are working at the port each day. Large ports have three shifts of eight hours each, so it is a 24/7 operation. If commodity will be discharged continuously:

* Commodities are not normally dispatched to the final receiving warehouse after dark. Make arrangement to place commodity discharged at night into a port transit shed. Confirm capacity of the transit shed(s), and specify in any contract for temporary storage exactly who is responsible for commodity damage or loss.
* Identify and plan for additional resources needed in terms of personnel (and vehicles for personnel) to manage operations that take place during the night.

1. Develop internal transport schedule.

* Wherever possible, minimize cost and handling loss by direct discharge of commodity from vessel onto trucks dockside.
* Ensure adequate transport each day for loading at the dockside, and clearing the transit shed (if applicable). Port transit sheds are generally costly and not well maintained, security is lax, and recordkeeping may be inaccurate. Avoid storage in transit sheds for more than one night.
* Determine the maneuverability of the trucks to avoid congestion at the port.

1. Contract internal transport, if this is not done by C&F agent.
2. Notify local officials at destination (for commodity transported to landlocked counties).