



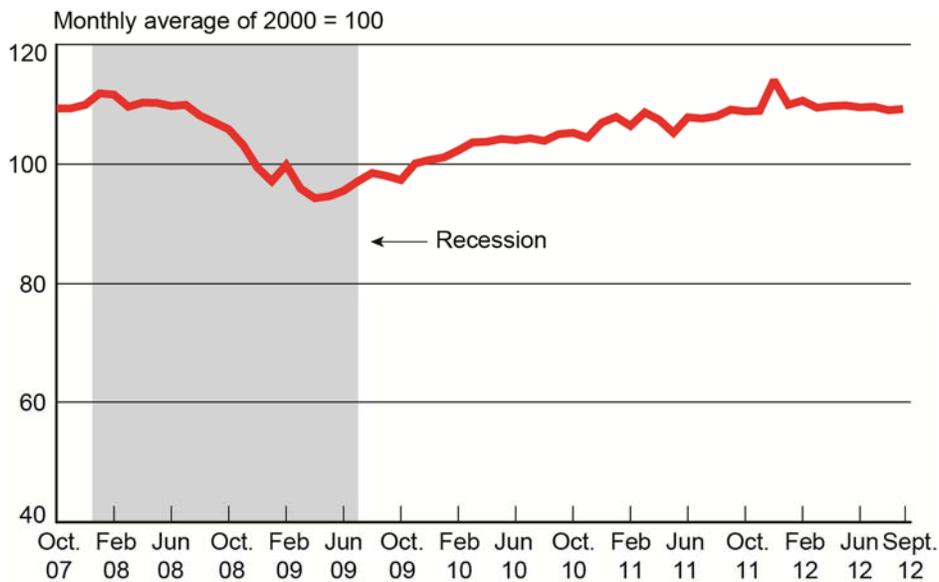
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BTS Data

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Freight Shipments Rose 0.2% in September from August

Five Years: Freight Transportation Services Index, October 2007-September 2012



Source for Recession Dates: National Bureau of Economic Research, [US Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions](#)

The amount of freight carried by the for-hire transportation industry rose 0.2 percent in September from August, rising after a one-month decline, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics' (BTS) Freight Transportation Services Index (TSI) released today. The September 2012 index level (109.2) was 15.8 percent above the April 2009 low during the recession (Tables 1, 2A).

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BTS, a part of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration, reported that the level of freight shipments in September measured by the Freight TSI (109.2) dropped 4.2 percent (Table 3) below the all-time high level of 114.0 in December 2011 (Table 2A). BTS' TSI records began in 1990. See historical [TSI data](#).

The Freight TSI measures the month-to-month changes in freight shipments by mode of transportation in tons and ton-miles, which are combined into one index. The index measures the output of the for-hire freight transportation industry and consists of data from for-hire trucking, rail, inland waterways, pipelines and air freight.

Analysis: The Freight TSI in September 2012 continued a pattern of little change since January as some other indicators showed an uptick in economic growth. [Gross Domestic Product](#) (GDP) grew 2.0 percent in the third quarter, up from 1.3 percent growth in the second quarter (though below 4.1 percent in fourth quarter of 2011), according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). Employment grew by 0.6 percent in September. Almost all freight modes experienced some increase in September, but rail freight showed a significant decline.

Trend: Since peaking in December 2011 (114.0) at the highest level in the 22-year history of the Freight TSI series, the index has remained in a narrow band during the nine months of 2012. It reached a high of 110.6 in February and a low of 109.0 in August. After dipping to 94.3 in April 2009 during the recession, freight shipments increased in 27 of the last 41 months, rising 15.8 percent during that period (Tables 2, 2A). For additional historical data, go to <http://www.bts.gov/xml/tsi/src/index.xml>.

Index highs and lows: Freight shipments in September 2012 (109.2) were 15.8 percent higher than the recent low in April 2009 during the recession (94.3). In April 2009, freight shipments were at their lowest level since June 1997 (92.3). The September 2012 level is down 4.2 percent from the historic peak reached in December 2011 (114.0).

Long-term trend: Freight shipments are up 1.0 percent in the five years from the pre-recession level of September 2007 and up 6.5 percent in the 10 years from September 2002 despite declines in recent years (Table 5).

Same month of previous year: September 2012 freight shipments rose 0.1 percent from September 2011 and 11.5 percent from September 2009, which was in the trough of the recession, but remained below the level in September 2006 (111.2) prior to the recession (Tables 4, 5).

3rd Quarter Changes: The Freight TSI fell 0.3 percent in the third quarter following no change in the second quarter (revised from -0.2) and a 3.9 percent decline in the first quarter. The index rose in two of the last six quarters with the last quarterly increase in the fourth quarter of 2011 (Table 10).

The TSI has three seasonally adjusted indexes that measures changes from the monthly average of the base year of 2000. The three indexes are freight shipments, passenger travel and a combined measure that merges the freight and passenger indexes. TSI includes historical data from 1990 to the present. Release of the October index is scheduled for Dec. 12.

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For a webinar on the TSI, see [Past Webinars](#). For a video explanation of the TSI, see [Overview of the Transportation Services Index](#). A BTS report explaining the TSI, [Transportation Services Index and the Economy](#), is available for download.

Passenger Index: The TSI for passengers rose 0.9 percent in September from its August level (Table 6). The Passenger TSI September 2012 level of 118.5 was 2.8 percent above the September 2011 level (Table 7). The index is up 0.5 percent in five years and up 26.3 percent in 10 years (Table 5). The passenger TSI measures the month-to-month changes in travel that involves the services of the for-hire passenger transportation sector. The seasonally adjusted index consists of data from air, local transit and intercity rail.

Combined Index: The combined freight and passenger TSI rose 0.4 percent in September from its August level (Table 8). The combined TSI September 2012 level of 111.7 was 0.9 percent above the September 2011 level (Table 9). The combined index is up 0.9 percent in five years and up 11.8 percent in 10 years despite recent declines (Table 5). The combined TSI merges the freight and passenger indexes into a single index.

Revisions: TSI numbers for May (Freight, Passenger and Combined) were revised because of revisions in the output data of the component transportation services. The May Freight TSI is 109.8, revised from 109.6 reported in last month's release. The May Passenger TSI is 115.7 revised from 117.0. The May Combined TSI is 111.4 revised from 111.6. The TSI for June, July, August and September are preliminary.

TSI revision policy: TSI is updated monthly with the latest four months' index numbers considered preliminary. Each month BTS releases the latest preliminary TSI, and replaces the oldest preliminary TSI with a revised TSI. More information about the BTS revision policies is available at [monthly revision policy](#) and [2011 Comprehensive Revision](#).

Table 1: Freight, Passenger and Combined Transportation Services Indexes since February 2012
Percent Change from Previous Month
(Seasonally Adjusted, Monthly Average of 2000 = 100)

	Freight		Passenger		Combined	
	Index	Pct. Change	Index	Pct. Change	Index	Pct. Change
March	109.5	-1.0	116.5	-0.3	111.4	-0.8
April	109.7	0.1	116.0	-0.4	111.3	0.0
May ^R	109.8	0.1	115.7	-0.2	111.4	0.0
June ^P	109.5	-0.3	117.6	1.6	111.7	0.3
July ^P	109.6	0.1	117.7	0.1	111.8	0.1
August ^P	109.0	-0.6	117.4	-0.3	111.2	-0.5
September^P	109.2	0.2	118.5	0.9	111.7	0.4

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 2: Freight Transportation Services Index Monthly Changes, 2009-2012
Percent change from previous month

	2009 % Change	2010 % Change	2011 % Change	2012 % Change
January	-2.4	0.5	1.0	-3.6
February	2.8	1.1	-1.4	0.7
March	-4.0	1.2	2.0	-1.0
April	-1.6	0.1	-1.0	0.1
May	0.3	0.5	-2.1	(R) 0.1
June	1.0	-0.1	2.5	(P) -0.3
July	1.6	0.3	-0.2	(P) 0.1
August	1.5	-0.4	0.4	(P) -0.6
September	-0.5	1.1	1.1	(P) 0.2
October	-0.7	0.2	-0.3	
November	2.9	-0.7	0.1	
December	0.6	2.4	4.7	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

Table 2A: Freight Transportation Services Index by Month, 2009-2012

	2009	2010	2011	2012
January	97.1	101.1	107.9	109.9
February	99.8	102.3	106.4	110.6
March	95.9	103.6	108.6	109.5
April	94.3	103.7	107.4	109.7
May	94.6	104.2	105.2	(R) 109.8
June	95.5	104.0	107.8	(P) 109.5
July	97.1	104.3	107.6	(P) 109.6
August	98.5	103.9	108.0	(P) 109.0
September	98.0	105.0	109.1	(P) 109.2
October	97.3	105.2	108.8	
November	100.1	104.4	108.9	
December	100.7	106.9	114.0	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

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Table 3: Freight, Passenger and Combined Transportation Services Indexes Year-to-Date Change, 2003-2012

Percent change to September from December of the previous year

Year	Freight	Passenger	Combined
2003	-0.1	0.5	0.1
2004	2.0	3.0	2.3
2005	0.5	3.4	1.3
2006	-0.2	1.3	0.3
2007	-1.5	3.2	-0.2
2008	-2.7	-3.2	-2.8
2009	-1.5	-1.0	-1.3
2010	4.3	3.4	4.0
2011	2.1	1.7	2.0
2012^P	-4.2	1.8	-2.5

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

Table 4: Freight Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year Percent Change in the September Freight TSI (Monthly average of 2000 = 100)

	September Freight TSI	Percent change from same month previous year
2003	104.3	1.7
2004	109.6	5.0
2005	110.7	1.0
2006	111.2	0.5
2007	108.1	-2.8
2008	107.0	-1.1
2009	98.0	-8.4
2010	105.0	7.1
2011	109.1	4.0
2012^P	109.2	0.1

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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**Table 5: Transportation Services Indexes from Previous Years
Percent Change to 2012 (September to September)**

Since September ...	Duration in years	Freight TSI Percent change to September 2012	Passenger TSI Percent change to September 2012	Combined TSI Percent change to September 2012
2011	1	0.1	2.8	0.9
2010	2	4.0	4.2	4.1
2009	3	11.5	8.0	10.5
2008	4	2.1	4.5	2.8
2007	5	1.0	0.5	0.9
2006	6	-1.8	7.2	0.7
2005	7	-1.3	7.6	1.1
2004	8	-0.3	14.5	3.7
2003	9	4.7	20.9	9.1
2002	10	6.5	26.3	11.8

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Note: The percent changes to September 2012 are all preliminary.

**Table 6: Passenger Transportation Services Index Monthly Changes, 2009-2012
Percent change from previous month**

	2009 % Change	2010 % Change	2011 % Change	2012 % Change
January	-1.0	0.6	0.2	-1.0
February	0.5	-2.1	-0.2	1.4
March	-1.4	2.3	0.9	-0.3
April	1.4	0.2	-0.1	-0.4
May	-1.7	0.6	1.2	(R) -0.2
June	0.5	0.8	-0.6	(P) 1.6
July	1.5	-0.2	0.1	(P) 0.1
August	-0.1	0.2	-1.2	(P) -0.3
September	-0.6	1.0	1.4	(P) 0.9
October	0.1	0.9	-0.4	
November	-0.1	-0.3	0.5	
December	0.2	-1.0	0.9	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

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**Table 7: Passenger Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year
Percent change in the September Passenger TSI
(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)**

	September Passenger TSI	Percent change from same month previous year
2003	98.0	4.4
2004	103.4	5.6
2005	110.1	6.4
2006	110.5	0.4
2007	117.9	6.6
2008	113.4	-3.8
2009	109.7	-3.3
2010	113.7	3.7
2011	115.2	1.3
2012^P	118.5	2.8

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

**Table 8: Combined Transportation Services Index Monthly Changes, 2009-2012
Percent change from previous month**

	2009 % Change	2010 % Change	2011 % Change	2012 % Change
January	-2.0	0.5	0.7	-2.9
February	2.2	0.2	-1.1	0.9
March	-3.3	1.5	1.7	-0.8
April	-0.8	0.1	-0.8	0.0
May	-0.3	0.5	-1.2	(R) 0.0
June	0.9	0.1	1.6	(P) 0.3
July	1.6	0.1	-0.1	(P) 0.1
August	1.1	-0.2	-0.1	(P) -0.5
September	-0.5	1.0	1.2	(P) 0.4
October	-0.5	0.4	-0.3	
November	2.1	-0.6	0.2	
December	0.5	1.5	3.6	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

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**Table 9: Combined Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year
Percent change in the September Combined TSI
(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)**

	September Combined TSI	Percent change from same month previous year
2003	102.4	2.4
2004	107.7	5.2
2005	110.4	2.5
2006	111.0	0.5
2007	110.7	-0.2
2008	108.7	-1.8
2009	101.0	-7.0
2010	107.3	6.2
2011	110.7	3.2
2012^P	111.7	0.9

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

**Table 10: Freight Transportation Services Index Change by Quarter, 2003-2012
Percent change from the last month of the previous quarter**

Year	1st Quarter (Jan-Mar) % Growth	2nd Quarter (Apr-Jun) % Growth	3rd Quarter (Jul-Sep) % Growth	4th Quarter (Oct-Dec) % Growth
2003	-0.9	-1.0	1.8	3.0
2004	1.9	0.5	-0.4	0.6
2005	1.4	-0.6	-0.3	0.7
2006	-0.5	0.9	-0.6	-1.3
2007	0.9	-2.2	-0.2	1.6
2008	-0.2	0.1	-2.5	-7.0
2009	-3.6	-0.4	2.6	2.8
2010	2.9	0.5	0.9	1.9
2011	1.5	-0.7	1.3	4.4
2012	-3.9	(R) 0.0	(P) -0.3	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

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Table 11: Passenger Transportation Services Index Change by Quarter, 2003-2012
Percent change from the last month of the previous quarter

Year	1st Quarter (Jan-Mar) % Growth	2nd Quarter (Apr-Jun) % Growth	3rd Quarter (Jul-Sep) % Growth	4th Quarter (Oct-Dec) % Growth
2003	-4.0	0.1	4.5	2.5
2004	1.8	2.1	-0.9	2.9
2005	1.9	0.5	0.9	-0.9
2006	2.0	0.1	-0.8	3.3
2007	2.1	0.4	0.7	-0.6
2008	-0.1	-0.3	-2.7	-2.3
2009	-1.9	0.1	0.8	0.3
2010	0.7	1.6	1.0	-0.4
2011	1.0	0.5	0.3	1.0
2012	0.1	(R) 1.0	(P) 0.7	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics
NOTE: P = preliminary

Table 12: Combined Transportation Services Index Change by Quarter, 2003-2012
Percent change from the last month of the previous quarter

Year	1st Quarter (Jan-Mar) % Growth	2nd Quarter (Apr-Jun) % Growth	3rd Quarter (Jul-Sep) % Growth	4th Quarter (Oct-Dec) % Growth
2003	-1.7	-0.7	2.6	2.9
2004	1.8	1.0	-0.5	1.2
2005	1.5	-0.2	0.0	0.2
2006	0.2	0.7	-0.7	0.0
2007	1.3	-1.5	0.0	1.0
2008	-0.2	0.0	-2.6	-5.8
2009	-3.1	-0.2	2.1	2.1
2010	2.3	0.8	0.9	1.2
2011	1.4	-0.4	1.0	3.5
2012	-2.8	(R) 0.3	(P) 0.0	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics
NOTE: P = preliminary

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Brief Explanation of the TSI

The Transportation Services Index (TSI) is a measure of the month-to-month changes in the output of services provided by the for-hire transportation industries. The freight index measure changes in freight shipments while the passenger index measures changes in passenger travel.

The TSI tells us how the output of transportation services has increased or decreased from month to month. The index can be examined together with other economic indicators to produce a better understanding of the current and future course of the economy. The movement of the index over time can be compared with other economic measures to understand the relationship of changes in transportation output to changes in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The freight transportation index consists of:

For-hire trucking,
Railroad freight services (including rail based intermodal shipments such as containers on flat cars),
Inland waterways transportation,
Pipeline transportation (including principally petroleum and petroleum products and natural gas), and
Air freight.

The index does not include international or coastal waterborne movements, private trucking, courier services, or the US Postal Service.

The passenger transportation index consists of:

Local transit,
Intercity passenger rail, and
Passenger air transportation.

The index does not include intercity bus, sight seeing services, ferry services, taxi service, private automobile usage, or bicycling and other non-motorized transportation.

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