Common shipping and freight abbreviations

We deal with a lot of abbreviations on a daily basis, but not all of us know what it is and what it means. Here are some of the practical and common day to day abbreviations used. This is by no means complete, but so far it just covers the terms that we use on a daily basis in terms of containerised operations.

If you wish to contribute any more abbreviations please do so in the comments section and I will update in the page.

- **ANF** – Arrival Notification – usually sent by the lines to the consignee and/or notify parties on the bill of lading to advise the arrival details of the cargo

- **B/L** – Bill of Lading – a document that evidences the contract of carriage and receipt of the goods by the carrier that will fulfill the contract of carriage

- **BAF** – Bunker Adjustment Factor is a surcharge to cover oil price fluctuation

- **CAF** – Currency Adjustment Factor is a surcharge to cover the currency fluctuations – charged still on some of the routes

- **COO** – Certificate Of Origin – issued by the local Chamber Of Commerce for all shipments exported out of South Africa

- **CTO** – Container Terminal Order – document used to move containers in and out of port – specific to South Africa

- **DO** – Delivery Order – document used to get release of an import cargo

- **DRO** – Delivery Release Order – document used to get release of an import cargo from an overstay depot

- **ETA** – Estimated Time of Arrival of a ship at the port

- **ETB** – Estimated Time of Berthing of a ship at the port
• **ETC** – Estimated Time of Completion of a ship's work at the port

• **ETD** – Estimated Time of Departure of a ship from the port

• **FAK** – Freight All Kinds – freight charged on the basis of the container irrespective of the type of cargo loaded in the container

• **FCL** – Full Container Load – denotes the container has cargo that is shipped by one shipper for delivery to one consignee – for further details refer to [http://shippingandfreightresource.com/2009/03/02/container-service-types/](http://shippingandfreightresource.com/2009/03/02/container-service-types/) which is an article in this blog

• **FEU** – Forty Equivalent Units – denotes a standard container that is 40’ in length

• **HBL** – House Bill of Lading – issued by the Freight Forwarder or NVOCC Operator to his shippers covering cargo that is shipped on their behalf

• **IMO Class** – the classification number of hazardous cargoes as prescribed by the IMO – for further in-depth info on the IMO class – refer to [http://shippingandfreightresource.com/2008/11/04/article-6-hazardous-cargo/](http://shippingandfreightresource.com/2008/11/04/article-6-hazardous-cargo/) which is an article in this blog

• **IMO** – International Maritime Organisation – the body that has been set up by the United Nations to co-ordinate international maritime procedures and practices

• **INCO Term** – various terms defined by the International Chamber of Commerce which is widely accepted and used by various entities for their trade. For further details refer to [http://shippingandfreightresource.com/2008/11/15/article-7-inco-terms/](http://shippingandfreightresource.com/2008/11/15/article-7-inco-terms/) which is an article in this blog

• **L/C** – Letter of Credit – a credit document issued between banks, shippers and consignees

• **LCL** – Less than Container Load – denotes the container has cargo that is shipped by
many shippers for delivery to many consignees – for further details refer to http://shippingandfreightresource.com/2009/03/02/container-service-types/ which is an article in this blog

- **M.V** – Motor Vessel – you will normally see this in front of the name of the ship in certain documents

- **MBL** – Master Bill of Lading – issued by the line to the Freight Forwarder who might have issued his HBL in lieu of this MBL

- **MT** – Metric Ton – a unit for measuring weight

- **NVOCC Operator** - Non Vessel Operating Container Carrier - a carrier who issues house bills of lading for carriage of goods on vessels that he neither owns nor operates

- **OBL** – Original Bill of Lading

- **POD** – Port Of Discharge

- **POL** – Port Of Loading

- **SOB** – Shipped On Board date indicates the date on which the container was loaded on board the subject ship

- **SOC** – Shippers Owned Container – a container that is owned by the shipper as opposed to containers that are generally owned by the shipping lines

- **TEU** – Twenty Equivalent Units – denotes a standard container that is 20’ in length.. Space and capacity of a container ship is calculated basis the number of 20’ containers that a ship can carry unless it is specially designed to carry more 40’ units

- **THC** – Terminal Handling Charges – this is charged by the respective port or terminal where the ships are loaded and off-loaded
**UN No.** – a number or ID given to each of the hazardous substance or hazardous group by the United Nations so to identify the haz substance being transported