



Houston Ship Channel Region Monthly Trade & Market Report

Latest insights on cargo activity, vessel traffic, and regional trade performance

HOUSTON – July 20, 2026 – The Houston Ship Channel region showed resilient trade activity, while Port Houston's public terminals recorded strong June container volumes and a moderate rebound for steel cargo.

"The Houston Ship Channel region continues to demonstrate why it is one of the nation's most important trade gateways," said Charlie Jenkins, CEO of Port Houston. "Our region is resilient and our port is ready to handle the diverse cargo needs. Overall, we are well-positioned for long-term growth and continued global competitiveness."

Key Takeaways

- Houston Ship Channel region total trade increased 17% through May, driven by a 23% increase in exports while import tonnage declined 4%.
- Crude oil and refined products together account for more than half of all tonnage moving through the Houston Ship Channel region, reinforcing the region's role as a leading U.S. energy gateway.
- Port Houston's public terminals handled more than 28 million tons through June, increasing 3% compared to the first half of last year and outperforming broader U.S. cargo market trends.
- General Cargo is up 34% at the public terminals with breakbulk driving much of that growth, increasing 35% through the first half of the year. Steel cargo has shown moderate growth in recent months, including a 46% increase in June, while year-to-date tonnage continues to trail last year by 14%.
- Port Houston handled 2,229,473 TEUs through H1, the biggest first-half container volume in Port Houston history.

Houston Ship Channel Region – May 2026

Source: U.S. Census Bureau data released July 9, 2026

Tonnage (Short Tons)	May 2026	May 2025	Change %	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change %
Export	19,329,185	15,088,844	↑ 28%	92,402,949	75,354,892	↑ 23%
Import	4,639,172	4,112,702	↑ 12%	21,370,024	22,327,166	↓ 4%
Total Tonnage	23,968,357	19,201,546	↑ 25%	113,772,973	97,682,058	↑ 17%

Houston Ship Channel Vessel Call Activity – June 2026

Source: Greater Houston Port Bureau's Marine Exchange of Texas released July 3, 2026

Vessel Traffic	June 2026	June 2025	Change %	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change %
Total Deep Draft Transits	1,559	1,381	↑ 13%	9,336	8,652	↑ 8%
Total Barge Transits	18,180	17,416	↑ 4%	110,262	104,624	↑ 5%

Port Houston Public Terminals Performance – June 2026

Source: Port Houston

Cargo Category	June 2026	June 2025	Change %	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change %
Loaded Imports (TEUs)	177,097	139,453	↑ 27%	1,029,667	963,836	↑ 7%
Loaded Exports (TEUs)	131,011	133,040	↓ 2%	800,967	803,278	0%
Total Containers (TEUs)	389,962	331,864	↑ 18%	2,229,473	2,169,677	↑ 3%
Steel Imports (Tons)	406,452	290,775	↑ 40%	1,844,985	2,184,349	↓ 16%
Steel (Tons)	430,510	294,699	↑ 46%	1,953,089	2,279,360	↓ 14%
General Cargo (Tons)	139,128	89,573	↑ 55%	692,934	517,265	↑ 34%
Total Tonnage (Tons)	4,682,452	4,519,675	↑ 4%	28,205,371	27,460,673	↑ 3%

View the Houston Ship Channel Region Monthly Trade & Market Report online at:

PortHouston.com/news-media-press/hsc-report

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About Port Houston

For more than 100 years, Port Houston has owned and operated the eight public wharves and terminals along the Houston Ship Channel, including the area's largest breakbulk facility and two of the most efficient container terminals in the country. Port Houston is the advocate and a strategic leader for the Channel. The Houston Ship Channel complex and its more than 200 private and eight public terminals is the nation's largest port for waterborne tonnage and an essential economic engine for the Houston region, the state of Texas, and the U.S. The Port of Houston supports 1.54 million jobs in Texas and 3.37 million jobs nationwide, and economic activity totaling \$439 billion in Texas – nearly 20 percent of Texas' total gross domestic product (GDP) – and \$906 billion in economic impact across the nation. For more information, visit the website at PortHouston.com.

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