

A Macro View of Chinese New Year Logistics Rhythm and Market Impact

Pre Holiday Carrier Space Situation

Ahead of the 2026 Chinese New Year, capacity on the Trans-Pacific trade lane shows structural tightness rather than an overall shortage. Unlike years when the holiday falls earlier, the relatively later timing of Chinese New Year in 2026 extends the pre-holiday shipping window, allowing carriers and shippers more time to adjust their schedules. In response, some carriers continue to proactively adjust sailings and consolidate capacity in selected weeks to manage post-holiday demand uncertainty. As a result, space tightness is more concentrated in specific timeframes and ports, rather than across the entire pre-holiday period. Overall, space availability remains manageable, but early planning is essential to secure optimal sailing windows.

Shippers' Pre Holiday Shipping Sentiment

Shippers' pre-holiday decisions in 2026 reflect a more measured and segmented approach. With the holiday occurring later than usual, some shippers benefit from an extended production and shipping cycle, reducing the urgency to ship aggressively in early January.

Shippers facing inventory or contractual pressure still prefer to ship ahead of the holiday to mitigate potential disruptions and cost volatility. Meanwhile, others adopt a more flexible, wait-and-see strategy, closely monitoring downstream demand and inventory levels. This divergence highlights a clearer distinction between short-term shipment timing and broader mid-term market expectations.

Impact of Carriers' Traditional Rolling Pool During the Festival on Shipment Rhythm

During the Chinese New Year period, carriers traditionally rely on rolling pool mechanisms to optimize vessel deployment and space utilization. In 2026, the later holiday timing means that rolling pool effects may be less abrupt, but still significant.

Cargo that fails to meet pre-holiday cut-offs is likely to be deferred into the first post-holiday sailings, potentially creating uneven shipment recovery rather than an immediate rebound. As such, rolling pool remains not just a scheduling adjustment, but a key factor influencing shipment rhythm and early post-holiday market signals.

(With a 2026 Market Perspective)

Impact of Early Factory Holidays on the Supply Chain

Despite the later Chinese New Year in 2026, early factory shutdowns remain a structural feature of the supply chain. Many manufacturers gradually reduce output one to two weeks before the holiday, compressing the effective shipping window regardless of calendar timing.

This trend continues to impact inland logistics. Trucking capacity tightens, driver availability declines, and container pick-up and return efficiency at ports is reduced. Even when ocean capacity is available, inland constraints increasingly define the actual execution capability of the supply chain.

Making Informed Choices and Arrangements. Choose Berkman

In response to the unique logistics dynamics of the 2026 Chinese New Year period, shippers are advised to take a more rhythm-based approach rather than relying solely on historical patterns. Key considerations include proactive planning, flexibility in routing and transport modes, and close coordination with logistics partners that can respond to changing conditions.

Berkman leverages its global network and localized operational expertise to support customers with pre-holiday space assurance, real-time schedule monitoring during the holiday period, and end-to-end supply chain visibility. By aligning shipment planning with the specific rhythm of the 2026 Chinese New Year, Berkman helps customers navigate seasonal volatility while maintaining continuity and resilience across the Trans-Pacific trade lane.

