

Great Lakes Maritime Shipping Glossary

Aft	Behind or back
Aid to navigation	Device that is external to the vessel whose purpose is to assist a navigator to determine position.
Ballast	Weight added to lower a ship in the water making it less top heavy when traveling without cargo. Fresh or salt water are most commonly used.
Beacon	Light to aid navigation.
Bearing	The direction to an object as measured from the boat.
Berth	A place where a ship anchors or ties up to a dock.
Boat	Smaller than a ship
Bow	The front of the ship.
Broach	When a vessel veers broadside to the wind and waves. See “listing.”
Buoy	A floating object moored to the bottom to mark a channel to aid to navigation.
Cargo	Goods carried by a ship. General cargo is boxed, bagged, crated or on a pallet. Bulk cargo is loose---usually granular, such as grain, iron ore, taconite pellets, or coal.
Channel	The deeper part of a river or harbor for ships to pass through; a route between two bodies of water.
Chart	Map of navigable waterways; nautical version of a highway road map.
Commodity	Anything that is bought and sold.
Course	Direction in which a boat is intended to be steered.
Danger signal on a ship	Five short toots.
Day beacon	Unlighted fixed aid to navigation.
Deck	Flat surface on the upper part of the ship where the crew and passengers can walk. Passenger ships have several decks, whereas a cargo ship (freighter) may have only one deck.

Dock	A long platform built next to the water as a landing place for ships.
Elevator	A building for storing grain.
Export	To send goods from one country for sale in another.
Foghorn	A horn blown during foggy weather to warn ships of danger.
Greenhouse gas	Gases in the atmosphere, including increased carbon dioxide, methane, ozone, and fluorocarbons that contribute to global warming and may result in greater evaporation from the Great Lakes.
Grounded	When a ship runs aground in shallow waters or on rocky outcrops on the .
Harbor	A place where ships may anchor and be safe from storms.
Hatch	Doorway on a vessel. Hatchcovers are on the deck of a freighter where the vessel is loaded with cargo.
Head	Bathroom on a vessel.
Heading	The direction the boat is pointing.
Hogging	Improper loading can cause a vessel to “hog” creating a convex curve in the hull.
Hull	Lowermost portion of a ship floating partially submerged.
Import	To bring goods into one country from another.
Inter-modal transport	Moving cargo using more than one mode of transportation, such as truck, railway, ship, or plane.
Invasive species	Non-native species that are transported to a new area that typically have no natural predators (ex: zebra mussels).
Leg of a journey	Portion of a trip.
Lighthouses	Mark entrances to harbors, and warn ship captains where there are dangerous shallow water or other obstructions.
Line	All ropes on a vessel are called lines.
Listing	Tipping to the side

Locks	A section of a waterway, in which gates are used to raise or lower the water level to allow ships to move between water bodies of different elevations.
Longshoreman	A person who works on the waterfront loading and unloading ships.
Marina	A small harbor where small (pleasure or fishing) boats may dock and pick up supplies.
Maritime	Having to do with sailing or shipping on; nautical.
Maritime shipping	Transportation of cargo via waterways.
Natural resources	Useful materials found in nature
Navigate	Steer or control the course of a ship.
Radar	Radar helps ships find their way in the dark or in the fog.
Pilothouse	Enclosed structure on the deck of a ship from which it can be navigated.
Port	1. A city or town with a harbor for loading/unloading ships. 2. Left-hand side of a vessel, facing forward.
Quarry	Limestone and other stone used in construction and steel-making is mined from quarries and loaded into Great Lakes ships.
Range	Two visible objects in a line, or the distance to an object
Sagging	Improper loading can cause a vessel to “sag” creating a concave curve in the hull.
Ship	Vessel larger than a boat.
Shipping route	Route which a freighter travels from one port to another.
Shipping	Transportation of cargo via water, road, rail or airplane using a freighter, train, truck, or plane.
Shipwreck	Remains of a wrecked ship.
Shipyard	A place where ships are built or repaired.
Starboard	The right-hand side of a vessel, facing forward.
Stern	Back of the ship

Taconite	Iron ore that is refined and formed into small marble-sized pellets
Terminal	Facilities at either end of a carrier line with management offices, storage warehouses, and freight or passenger facilities serving as a junction point with other lines or modes (methods) of transportation.
Ton	A unit of weight equivalent to 2,000 pounds.
Track	The path the boat has actually followed.
Tugboats	Help move ships around in harbors or rivers.
U.S. Coast Guard	Protects the Great Lakes in a variety of ways including environmental management (pollution spills, invasive species, etc.), security, navigation of foreign vessels, and search & rescue. Grand Haven, Michigan is Coast Guard City, U.S.A.
Vessel	A broad term for any watercraft.

