

## Air Transport Arrangements

The nature and type of the arrangements humanitarian agencies enter into for the movement of cargo by air will be largely informed by the volume of goods, type of goods and shipping/destination points. Most medium sized cargo loads (1-20 full pallets / 30 cubic meters) shipped internationally will generally not require a specialised flight, while a high volume of cargo (500+ full pallets / 700 cubic meters) might require obtaining a full plane. Conversely, extended, routine operation inside the borders of a country no matter how small might require long term leasing of an aircraft. For a general overview of airframe size relative to cargo capacity, reference the [air cargo capacity table](#).

In almost all situations, different arrangements for air cargo transport will need to be arranged by forwarders, brokers, or other third-parties who have the ability to connect requestors to various available options. Regular movement of small cargo can be done through a typical freight forwarder, while specialised charters or leases may be done through specialised brokerages. Agencies acquiring these arrangements will need to go through their typical procurement process.

Typical air transport arrangements can look like:

**Regular scheduled** – Air carriers around the world develop regular routes between high volume or common destinations. Cargo travelling on regularly scheduled movement is similar to buying a seat on a regular passenger plane – it's easy to identify space and move cargo because the movement is predictable and frequent. Cargo shipped along regularly scheduled routes can be moved as excess cargo in the hold of a commercial passenger plane, or transported using regularly scheduled cargo planes. Often, cargo moved along regularly scheduled routes will be broken up into multiple tranches and re-consolidated on the receiving end, a process that is enabled by the predictability of arriving flights. Regular movement by air is cheaper than organising special flights. Unfortunately, regular scheduled flights will not deviate from their courses, and tend to only serve more developed markets.

**Charters** – Many forwarders and air carrier specialise in organising charter flights – flights specifically dedicated to the movement of one or a very few consignments. Charter flights are often extremely expensive, but have the advantage of being able to depart from a specified origin, arrive at a specified destination, and meet the size and airframe requirements of the proposed air movement. A properly arranged charter might be able to match the size of the aircraft to the requested cargo size saving on total costs, as well as identify special needs such as the overall operating environment or limitations on size of aircraft. Unfortunately, charting aircraft frequently means repositioning an aircraft from another area as the exact airframe may not be domiciled at the desired point of departure. This means that users of charter services usually have to pay for repositioning costs. As charters are basically only single aircraft, shippers run the risk of technical defaults holding up the entire process as well.

**Aircraft Leasing** – In situations where long term, well identified needs are in place, organisations may choose to lease aircraft. Aircraft can be leased for months or years at a time, and leased aircraft can be used on an ongoing basis for needs as they evolve. A "Dry Lease" is when an aircraft is made available to an agency without additional support of crew or maintenance, while a "Wet Lease" is a lease type that includes pilots, crew, and aircraft maintenance. Wet leases are more expensive, especially because flight and maintenance crews are paid at a commercial rate and because food and housing is usually part of the contract, but many agencies prefer wet leases due to the fact they take the complexity of aircraft management out of the hands of non-aviation experts.

**Other arrangements** – During times of emergency, air cargo may be transported through a variety ad-hoc or irregular means. This might include cargo movement on military air craft, in personally owned air craft, or agencies offering free space to each other. The process of utilising non-traditional air transport to move cargo can have varied procedures and tolerance thresholds. Irrespective of the movement type, users will have to respect CAA and national import regulations at all times.