

CHAPTER 15

Marine Port Facilities*

A. NATURE AND COMPOSITION OF PORTS AND TERMINAL FACILITIES

1. DESCRIPTION OF PORTS AND TERMINAL FACILITIES

(a) *General Physical Characteristics—Structures and Equipment*

A port is a shelter-harbor where marine terminal facilities are provided. The facilities consist of piers, wharves, and slips at which ships berth while loading or unloading cargo; cranes and other mechanical handling equipment which keep the cargo flowing between ship and terminal; transit sheds, warehouses, and other storage areas where goods may be stored for shorter or longer periods while awaiting distribution or sailing; and tracks and roadways which provide the access to and clearance from the terminal facility. Thus the terminal must be served by railroad, highway, or inland waterway connections. In brief, the harbor is a water area affording a natural or artificial haven for ships. Only when it has been developed for transacting business between ship and shore does a harbor become part of a port. Therefore, a port normally consists of a harbor plus marine terminal facilities.

A marine terminal is that part of a port or harbor which provides berthing, cargo handling, storage areas, and railroad and roadway clearance facilities. Terminal facilities are all those arrangements and systems, mechanical or otherwise, which make easy transference of passengers and commodities between ship and shore.

The three most common types of marine terminals, based on use of facility and the service they perform, are freight or cargo terminals where traffic is mainly mixed general cargo and a few passengers carried by freighters, passenger terminals where only passengers are embarked or disembarked with their baggage along with small amounts of lightweight cargo, and bulk cargo or specialized terminals where such products as petroleum, grain, coal, ore, and miscellaneous dry and liquid bulk cargoes are stored and handled. A fourth type of specialized facility is the container terminal which is increasing in number and importance and is specially designed for the accommodation of containerships and the handling and storage of van-sized containers in connection with the ocean transportation of containerized cargo.

Physically, a marine terminal may consist of only a single pier or wharf or it may comprise a number of piers and wharves grouped together and operated as a unit. Usually, the terminal includes open or covered storage facilities, or a combination of both, and often the entire facility is enclosed by a fence.

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