

Shipping from China to USA: A Comprehensive Overview



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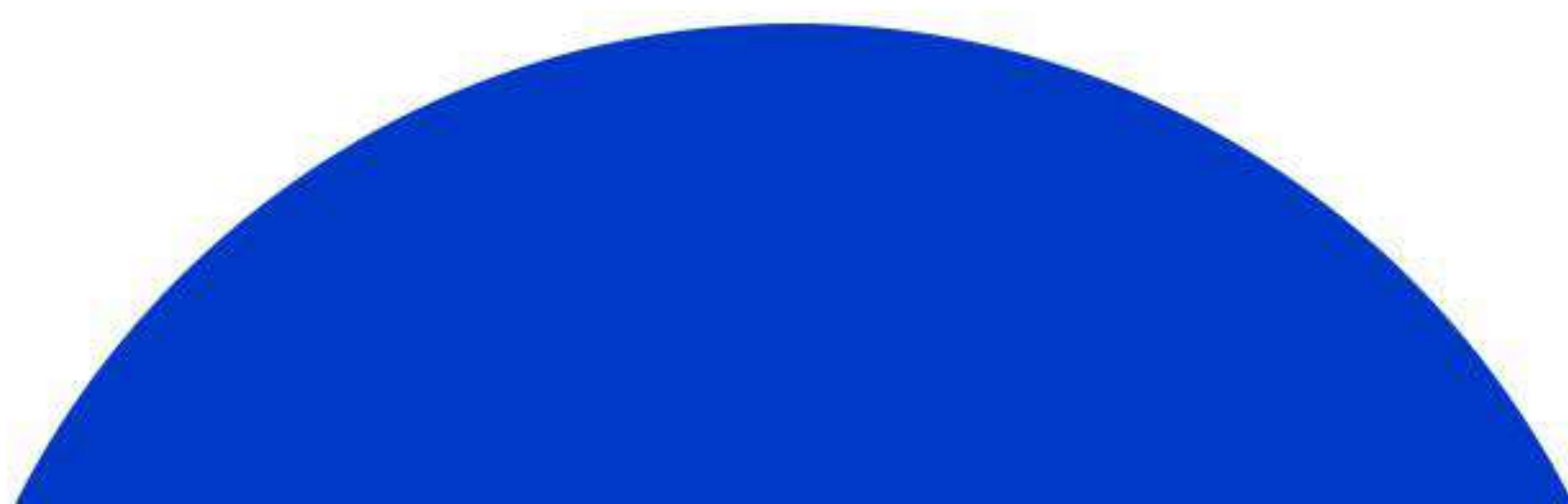
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Introduction

E-commerce has revolutionized the way businesses and consumers interact, creating a global marketplace that operates 24/7. In 2023, global e-commerce sales surpassed **\$6 trillion**, with the U.S. and China leading the market. The rapid growth of digital commerce is driven by increasing internet penetration, mobile shopping, and the rise of direct-to-consumer (DTC) brands. With over **2.6 billion online shoppers** worldwide, businesses are constantly seeking efficient ways to manage fulfillment and shipping to meet rising customer expectations.

However, as e-commerce expands, so do its challenges. Businesses must navigate complex logistics, fluctuating shipping costs, evolving trade policies, and growing customer demands for faster and more affordable delivery. In particular, cross-border fulfillment—such as shipping from China to the U.S.—requires businesses to stay ahead of regulatory changes, warehouse management strategies, and cost-efficient shipping solutions.

As the industry continues to evolve, companies must adapt to new fulfillment models, leverage strategic warehouse locations, and optimize their supply chains to remain competitive. This whitepaper will explore key aspects of global fulfillment, including the latest U.S. trade policies, differences between China and U.S. warehousing, and how businesses can streamline their shipping processes to succeed in a dynamic market.

The New U.S. Tariffs: What You Need to Know

What is Changing?

Before this new policy, any shipment valued at \$800 or less could enter the US without duties. This was a huge advantage for sellers using dropshipping, direct shipping from China, or small batch fulfillment. As of now, the T86 is still in effect. However, if the duty-free threshold is removed for goods subject to Section 201, 232, or 301 tariffs, the impacts would be significant:

- **Section 301 tariffs.**

If your products are made in China, even if they cost less than \$800, they will now be taxed.

This includes:

- Apparel
- Toys
- Smartphones & Electronics
- Other consumer goods

Even if you're not importing from China directly, you could still be affected.

- **Stricter Reporting Requirements**

Before, customs clearance was relatively easy for de minimis shipments. You could declare basic product descriptions and often get away with undervaluing goods. But now, that's changing.

What's required now?

- The first sale price must be declared – meaning you must report the actual purchase price from your manufacturer, not an adjusted or artificially lowered value. And the minimum declared value is \$5 – If you try to declare a value lower than this and get caught, you could face fines.

- 10-digit HTS codes are mandatory – every shipment must be classified correctly to avoid delays and penalties.
- Accurate country of origin details – if your product contains components from multiple countries, customs needs to know exactly where each part is from. If you're sourcing from China, you'll need to work closely with your suppliers to ensure you have the right invoices, documentation, and pricing records.



Understanding How Tariffs Are Applied

- **Base Import Duty (If Applicable)**

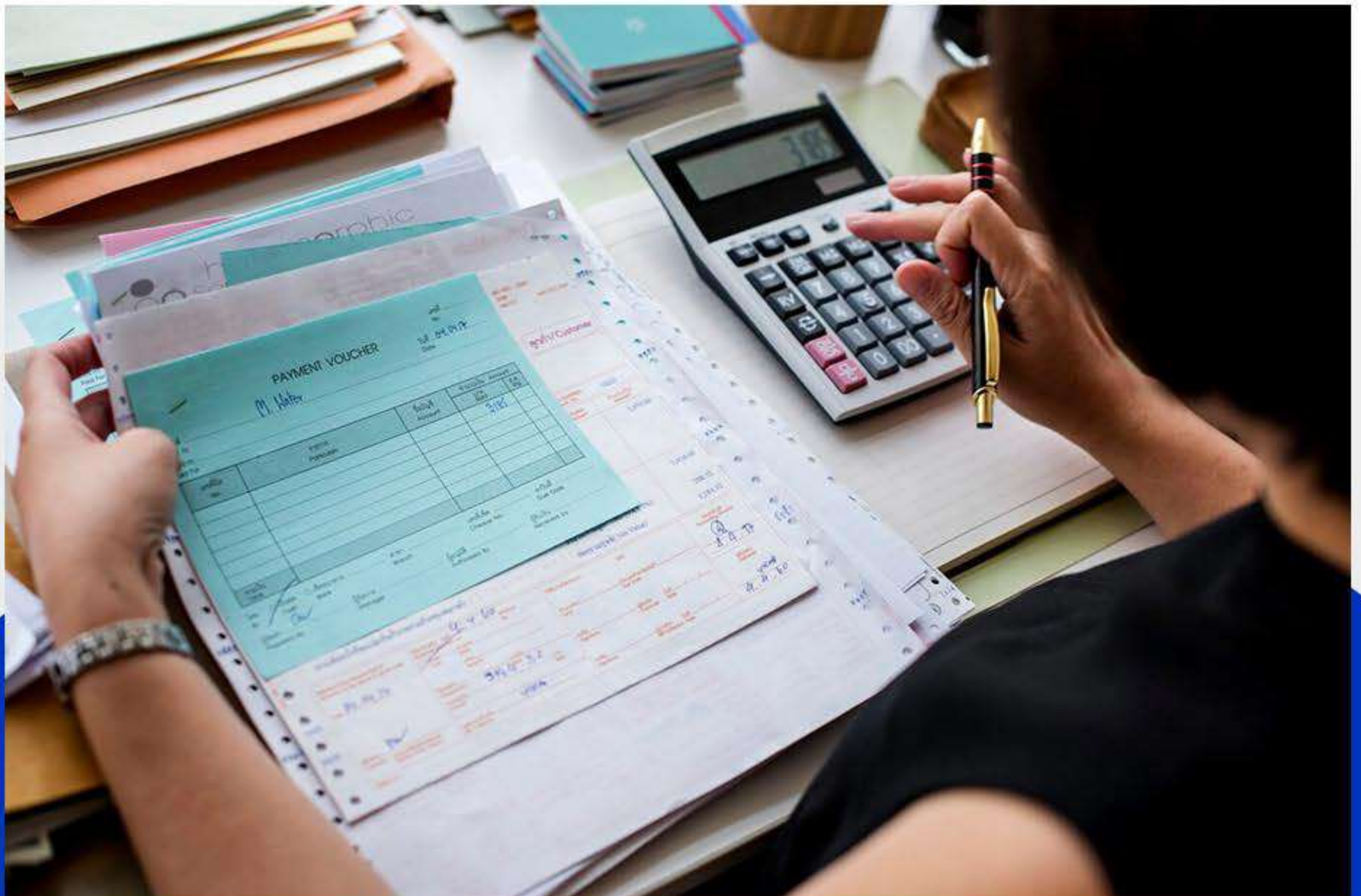
Many products already have a standard import duty when entering the U.S. This rate is determined by the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) classification of the product.

- **Section 301 Tariffs (Trump-Era Tariffs)**

Since 2018, the U.S. has imposed additional tariffs on many Chinese imports under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. These tariffs range from 7.5% to 25%, depending on the product category.

- **New 2025 Tariffs (The 20% Increase)**

This new tariff adds an extra 20% tax on top of any existing duties and Section 301 tariffs, further increasing costs for importers.



Scenario

- Product Value: \$100
- Product Type: Electronic Device
- Base Import Duty (HTS Code Rate): 5%
- Existing Section 301 Tariff: 10%
- New 2025 Tariff: 20%
- Surcharge for Manual, Formal Entry/Release (Class Code 500) (Replacing MPF): \$3.93
- Harbor Maintenance Fee (HMF): 0.125% (Applicable only for sea freight)

Step-by-Step Cost Breakdown

Base Import Duty (5%)

$$=100 \times 5\% = 5.00 = 100 \times 5\% = 5.00$$

Section 301 Tariff (10%)

$$=100 \times 10\% = 10.00 = 100 \times 10\% = 10.00$$

New 2025 Tariff (20%)

$$=100 \times 20\% = 20.00 = 100 \times 20\% = 20.00$$

Surcharge for Manual, Formal Entry (Replacing MPF)

$$=3.93 = 3.93$$

Harbor Maintenance Fee (HMF) (0.125%) (Only if shipping via sea freight)

$$=100 \times 0.125\% = 0.125 = 100 \times 0.125\% = 0.125$$

Final Cost Calculation

Total Cost Before Shipping (excluding HMF for non-sea shipments):

$$100 + 5.00 + 10.00 + 20.00 + 3.93 = 138.93$$

$$100 + 5.00 + 10.00 + 20.00 + 3.93 = 138.93$$

Total Cost for sea Freight Shipments (including HMF):

$$138.93 + 0.125 = 139.06$$

Summary of Final Costs

Final cost to import this \$100 product = \$138.93 (before shipping fees).

If shipping via sea freight, the total cost is \$139.06 (includes HMF).

If shipping via express courier (DHL, FedEx), additional handling fees may apply.

Please note that this calculation is for reference purposes only. Actual import costs may vary. For an accurate assessment based on your specific situation, please consult a professional, such as a logistics expert or tax advisor.

Strategies to Face the U.S. tariffs



Diversify Your Suppliers

Source from countries like Vietnam, India, or Mexico to reduce dependency on China and lower tariff costs.



Negotiate Better Terms with Suppliers

Discuss price reductions, bulk discounts, or alternative payment terms to help offset tariff increases.



Leverage Local Warehousing

Storing inventory in the U.S. improves shipping speed, reduces customs delays, and avoids import tariffs on stocked goods.



Strategically Adjust Pricing

Gradually increase prices while emphasizing product value and maintaining customer trust.



Monitor Trade Policies & Seek Exemptions

Stay updated on tariff changes and explore possible exclusions that could apply to your products.

The Key Differences Between China and U.S. Warehouses

Using a China Warehouse

✓ Pros

Lower Upfront Costs

- Manufacturing and storing goods in China is often cheaper due to lower labor and operational costs.
- You only pay for shipping and tariffs when you move inventory to the U.S., which can help with cash flow.

Flexibility for International Markets

- If you sell to customers outside the U.S., a China warehouse can be a central hub for global distribution.
- You can avoid U.S. tariffs altogether for orders shipped to other countries.

No Need for Large Inventory

You can produce and store goods in China and ship them as needed, reducing the risk of overstocking.

✗ Cons

Higher Tariffs and Shipping Costs

- Every time you import goods from China to the U.S., you'll pay tariffs and shipping fees.

Less Competitive for U.S. Customers

While competitors in the USA may offer 2-3 day shipping, using a China warehouse comes with a shipping time of 7-12 days.

Supply Chain Complexity




Managing inventory across borders can be challenging, especially with customs delays or trade policy changes if you don't have a reliable partner present there.

NextSmartShip Pricing

China Warehouse

Quotation (USD)		Chargeable weight (KG)			
Countries	Channels Types	1	1.5	1.8	2
US	Economic	16.22	23.58	27.99	34.3
	Expedited	20.74	26.83	30.48	32.91
	DHL	29.38	30.4	34.12	34.12
UK	Economic	8.59	11.53	13.28	14.46
	Expedited	10.45	15.34	17.86	19.54
	FedEx	26.9	28.88	32.69	32.69
AU	Economic	8.24	10.59	11.8	12.61
	DHL	35.02	44.51	54.01	54.01
	Expedited	11.63	14.73	16.49	17.65

How to Take Advantage of Our China Warehouses

-  Get a quote within 24h
-  Book a meeting on the very same day
-  Free Onboarding - with zero upfront fees

What You Can Expect



Value-added Service



60 Days Free Storage



24/7 Support / Quick Response

Using a U.S. Warehouse

✓ Pros

Faster Shipping to U.S. Customers

- Storing inventory in the U.S. allows you to offer faster shipping (2–3 days), improving customer satisfaction and competitiveness.

Avoid Frequent Tariff Payments

- Once you import goods from China and pay the tariffs, you won't incur those costs again for the same inventory.
- This can make your pricing more predictable and stable.

Better Control Over Inventory

You can handle returns and exchanges more efficiently.

✗ Cons

Higher Upfront Costs

- You'll need to pay tariffs and shipping costs upfront when importing bulk inventory to the U.S.
- U.S. warehousing and labor costs are higher than in China, increasing operational expenses.

Risk of Overstocking

- If demand for your products fluctuates, you could end up with excess inventory that ties up capital.
- You may also face storage fees for unsold goods.

Less Flexibility for Global Markets




- If you sell internationally, shipping from a U.S. warehouse may be more expensive and slower than shipping from China.

NextSmartShip Pricing

US Warehouses

Weight	NextSmartShip	Ship***	You can save
0.28KG (10 oz)	7.54	9.55	21.05%
0.45KG (1 pound)	12.05	15.05	19.93%
0.9KG (2 pound)	14	17.77	21.22%
2.25KG (5 pound)	17.54	25.05	29.98%
4.5KG (10 pound)	22.45	35.1	36.04%
9.9KG (22 pound)	14.6	46.3	68.47%
22.5KG (50 pound)	24.63	74.15	66.78%

How to Take Advantage of Our US Warehouses

-  Get a quote within 24h
-  Book a meeting on the very same day
-  Free Onboarding - with zero upfront fees

What You Can Expect



Competitive
Prices



30 Days
Free Storage



24/7 Support /
Quick Response

How to Ship from China to USA

Key Information to Know for Shipping from China to the USA

- **Tariffs & Costs**

New Tariffs: Be aware of the extra 10% tariff on goods imported from China to the US, which was implemented in February 2025, and the possibility of further increases.

- **De Minimis Exemption**

The De Minimis exemption for low-value imports, allowing duty-free entry for shipments under \$800, remains in effect but is subject to potential changes. Stay informed by following the latest updates in the news.

- **Shipping Options & Strategies:**

LCL vs. FCL Shipping:

Consider LCL (Less than Container Load) shipping for smaller shipments, or FCL (Full Container Load) for larger shipments.

- **DDP vs. DDU:**

Understand the difference between Delivery Duty Paid (DDP) and Delivery Duty Unpaid (DDU) for clarity on who is responsible for duties and taxes.



• Navigating Customs Regulations and Duties

Customs regulations represent a unique challenge when importing goods from China. Each port operates under specific protocols that businesses must adhere to.

- **Documentation:** A detailed approach to paperwork ensures compliance. These include commercial invoices, packing lists, and bill of lading.
- **Tariffs and Taxes:** Import duties differ based on product classification. Familiarizing yourself with the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) can mitigate errors.
- **Legal Compliance:** Each good must comply with safety standards—overlooking these regulations leads to delays and potential financial penalties.

TIP: Partner with a fulfillment provider to ensure you have all the correct documentation.

Important Note: The information provided is subject to change based on updated regulations and may vary depending on your business type or the nature of your products. Always check the latest requirements to ensure compliance.

How Long Does It Take to Ship from China to the U.S.?

Shipping Mode	Transit Time	Suitability
Express Shipping	1 to 3 days	The quickest yet most expensive means
China Post	15 to 30 days	Suitable for packages under 2kg
3PL Dedicated Shipping Lines	7 to 15 days	Ideal for those wanting to skip the hassle of order fulfillment
Air Freight	2 to 7 days	Offers a good balance between cost and speed for time-sensitive or high-value goods
Sea Freight	23 to 30 days	Cost-effective for larger shipments

What Kind of eCommerce Sellers Should Use U.S. Warehouses?

- **High-Volume Sellers**

If your business ships a large number of orders to the U.S. each month, using a local warehouse can significantly cut costs, speed up delivery, and prevent stock shortages. Instead of paying high international shipping rates for each order, bulk importing to a U.S. fulfillment center lowers expenses and ensures products are always available for fast domestic shipping.

- **Brands That Prioritize Fast Delivery**

Customers now expect fast, reliable shipping, and long delivery times lead to lost sales. U.S. warehouses enable 2-day or even same-day fulfillment, helping businesses stay competitive on platforms like Amazon while reducing cart abandonment. Faster shipping also improves customer satisfaction, leading to higher repeat purchase rates.

- **Subscription Box and Pre-Order Businesses**

Managing inventory for subscription boxes, pre-orders, or crowdfunding campaigns requires precise logistics. A U.S. fulfillment center ensures products are ready to ship on time, streamlines kitting and bundling, and prevents delays that frustrate customers. For sellers with recurring shipments, ensuring inventory is strategically placed near buyers is essential.



How to Use a 3PL (Third-Party Logistics)

Choosing a 3PL Provider:

- **Specialization:** Look for a 3PL provider with experience in handling international shipping, particularly from China to the US, and with expertise in customs clearance.
- **Services:** Ensure the 3PL offers the services you need, such as warehousing, order fulfillment, pick-and-pack solutions, and freight forwarding.
- **Reputation:** Research the 3PL's reputation and track record to ensure they are reliable and trustworthy.
- **Cost:** Compare quotes from different 3PL providers to find the most competitive rates.
- **Examples:** Several 3PL providers with strong online reputations include NextSmartShip, SFC, and Yanwen.

Preparing Your Shipment:

- **Product Information:** Provide the 3PL with detailed information about your products, including dimensions, weight, and any special handling requirements.
- **Shipping Instructions:** Clearly communicate your shipping instructions, including the desired shipping method (sea freight, air freight, or express) and the final destination.
- **Documentation:** Ensure you have all the necessary documentation for customs clearance, such as invoices, packing lists, and certificates of origin.

Receiving & Warehousing:

- **Receiving:** The 3PL warehouse in China will receive goods from your manufacturers, inspect them for accuracy and quality, and log them into inventory.
- **Shelving & Storage:** The 3PL will organize products in the warehouse, ensuring efficient retrieval for shipment.
- **Inventory Management:** The 3PL can track stock levels and provide reports on available inventory.

Warehouse Receiving Process Flow



Pre-receiving



Receiving



Inspection



Shelving

Shipping Process:

- **Product Staging:** The 3PL will likely have a warehouse in China where you can stage your products for shipment.
- **Customs Clearance:** The 3PL will handle the customs clearance process
- **Shipping:** The 3PL will arrange for the shipment of your products to the US, using the chosen shipping method.
- **Tracking:** The 3PL will provide you with tracking information so you can monitor the progress of your shipment.
- **Delivery:** Once the shipment arrives in the US, the 3PL will arrange for last-mile delivery to your specified destination.

Additional Considerations:

There are several shipping methods you can choose from:

- **Sea Freight:** Suitable for large volumes and non-urgent shipments, offering the most cost-effective option.
- **Air Freight:** Faster than sea freight, suitable for time-sensitive or high-value goods.
- **Express Shipping:** The fastest option, ideal for urgent shipments, but also the most expensive.

25%

Reduction in
Freight Costs

40%

Faster Delivery
Time

60%

Reduction in Logistics
Workload

Compared to standard international shipping.

Concerns About Shipping from China

When importing from China, several key concerns can impact your business. It's essential to address these issues when selecting a reliable partner, as working with inexperienced or unprofessional providers can lead to significant problems.

Common concerns include:

- Communication barriers – Language differences and misunderstandings can cause delays and errors.
- Freight forwarder reliability – Choosing an inefficient forwarder can result in shipment delays and mismanagement.
- High Costs – Hidden fees, fluctuating rates, and unexpected expenses can affect your budget.
- Slow delivery times – Delays in production or shipping can disrupt your supply chain.
- Customs clearance complications – Improper documentation or non-compliance with regulations can cause shipments to be held up.



Why Choose NextSmartShip

01

More Than a Business Partner

We don't just work with direct-to-consumer (DTC) brands—we understand them. We started as a marketing firm, so our expertise helps brands connect with their audiences, ensuring products move off the shelves, not just into warehouses.

02

Accelerate Your Cash Flow

Traditional shipping methods tie up your capital for months. With our fast shipping solutions, you can turn inventory into cash in under 10 days, keeping your business agile and profitable.

03

Exclusive Shipping Advantages and Competitive Rates.

Carrier Benefits – Exclusive perks with UPS, FedEx, DHL, and USPS first-level agent services, including waived residential and remote surcharges for cost savings.

Strategic Partnerships – VIP access to top providers like for competitive rates.

Custom Shipping Solutions – Tailored routes to meet your budget and maximize cost-effectiveness.



NSS Express

Express Shipping

+0%

Cost

3 - 5

Days

Competitors'

Express Shipping

+20%

Cost

3 - 6

Days



NSS Expedite

Shipping Litne

+0%

Cost

5 - 8

Days

Competitors Expedite

Express Shipping

+15%

Cost

6 - 8

Days



NSS Economic

Shipping Line

+0%

Cost

7 - 12

Days

Competitors Economic

Shipping Line

+20%

Cost

8 - 13

Days

Your All-in-One E-commerce Partner

04

Optimized Inventory Management

- Flexible Inventory - Adjust stock levels quickly using short-term forecasting to avoid overbuying or stockouts.
- AI-Enhanced Routing - Smarter logistics for efficient fulfillment and lower costs.
- Real-Time Inventory Synchronization - Stay updated and manage stock across multiple channels.

05

Reliable and Transparent Fulfillment

- Stable & Scalable Operations - Consistent performance, even during peak seasons.
- On-time shipments Your products are processed within 48h and ready to sell within 3 days.
- Transparent Pricing - Our upfront fee structure that ensures no hidden fees.
- Compensation Assurance - Coverage for delays or lost packages.
- Customs & Clearance Support - Hassle-free international logistics management.

06

Effortless Global Expansion

Expand into 200+ countries with our global fulfillment network. Our strategically located fulfillment center in China, the heart of the world's best suppliers, is backed by a network of 10 warehouses worldwide for fast and efficient distribution.

Driving Your Growth, From Start to Finish



Quick Response
Get a quote in 24h



24/7 Bilingual
Customer service

07

Powerful Order Management System (OMS)

Seamlessly integrate with Shopify, WooCommerce, and other major platforms using our intuitive, AI-powered OMS. Manage everything in one place with:

- Automated Order Processing
- Real-Time Order Tracking
- Omnichannel Fulfillment
- Inventory Synchronization

08

Reliable and Transparent Fulfillment

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- Compensation Assurance – Coverage for delays or lost packages.
- Customs & Clearance Support – Hassle-free international logistics management.

09

Value-Added Services

Enhance your brand with:

- Professional Product Photography – High-quality visuals to boost conversions.
- Custom Packaging – Strengthen brand identity with personalized packaging.
- Engaging Marketing Materials – Stand out with tailored branding support.

With NextSmartShip, you get more than a fulfillment provider—you get a strategic partner dedicated to your growth, efficiency, and success.

Conclusion

Deciding whether to use a China-based or U.S.-based warehouse depends on your business model, shipping strategy, and market demands. Each option has distinct advantages that cater to different types of eCommerce sellers.

You can consider using a China Warehouse if:

- You sell low-cost, high-volume products and want to minimize storage fees.
- Your customers are willing to wait longer for shipping in exchange for lower prices.
- You prioritize lower fulfillment costs and reduced upfront inventory investment.
- You frequently test new products and prefer to keep inventory close to manufacturers.

A U.S. Warehouse would work for you if:

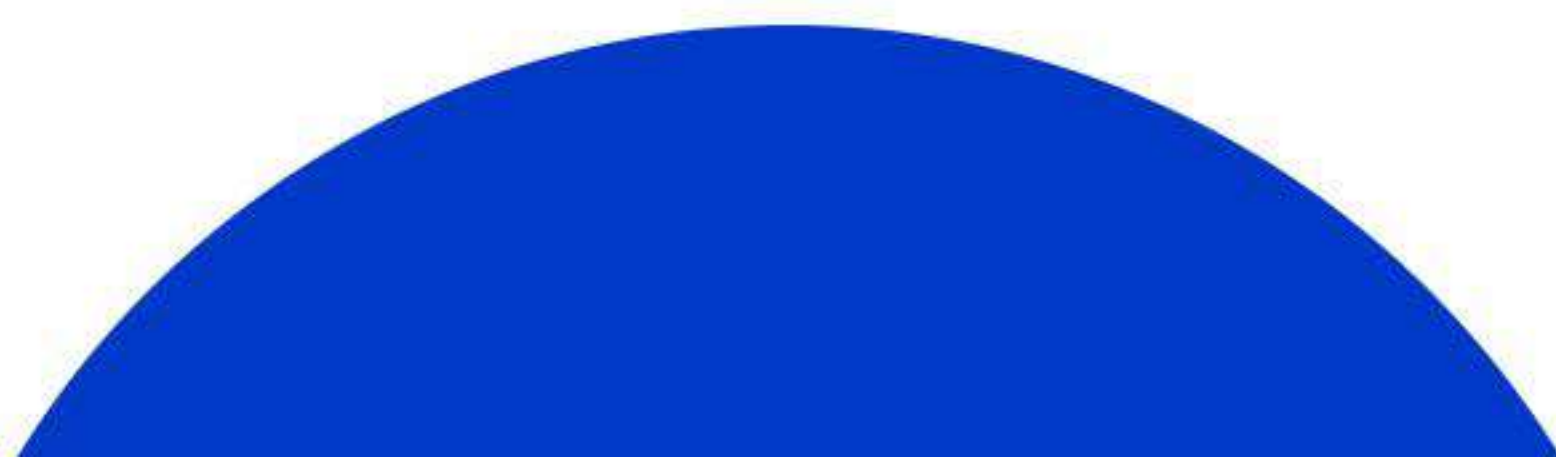
- You cater primarily to U.S. customers who expect fast delivery (2-5 days).

- You sell high-ticket or time-sensitive products where speed enhances customer satisfaction.
- You want to reduce the impact of U.S. tariffs on Chinese imports by shipping in bulk.
- You need reliable and hassle-free returns management for U.S.-based buyers.

For many businesses, a hybrid fulfillment strategy, using both China and U.S. warehouses offers the best balance of cost-efficiency and fast delivery.

By leveraging a 3PL (Third-Party Logistics) provider, you can optimize inventory distribution, reduce shipping costs, and improve customer experience.

As eCommerce evolves and U.S. tariffs continue to shift, staying agile with your logistics strategy is key to long-term success.



Since 2019, NextSmartShip has served thousands of global DTC brands, including many startups, in achieving outstanding growth through its professional, stable, and affordable fulfillment services.



YA

Yair

1 review

📍 MY



✔ Verified

Aug 23, 2024

Pleasure working with

We were in need of a third party fulfillment center after having tried a few with little success. The Nextsmartship team runs a great business. They helped us make a huge step forward by figuring out the best routes and options for us, which allowed us to save money while creating a better experience for our clients. Big win for any e-commerce owner.

For inquiries, contact us.



www.nextsmartship.com



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