Container Dwell Time is Up Again

For the month of June, the average container dwell time at the San Pedro Bay ports, the amount of time a container stays at a marine terminal after it is unloaded from an ocean carrier and leaves by truck, rose to 4.76 days, up from 3.96 the month before. The heightened dwell time is a result of an ongoing record cargo volume surge impacting the entire supply chain resulting in the lack of warehouse space, unused terminal appointments, lack of railcar availability, lack of truck capacity and equipment shortages. As such, 23.6% of containers remained at their respective terminals for more than five days before getting picked up for departure.

Dwell time for containers leaving the terminal by on-dock rail increased by more than a day. Through June, the average dwell time was 11.8 days, up from the already high 10.5 days the month before. Railcar availability and system bottlenecks are impacting the railroads on a national level and this cargo is backing up on the marine terminals.

“Container dwell time is a vital metric to monitor because it provides an idea of the efficiency of marine terminal operators and the rest of the supply chain partners. The ports anticipate that back-to-school consumer demand and the holiday shipping season, which runs from July through October, will create additional congestion pressure,” said Jessica Alvarenga, Manager of Government Affairs for the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association. “Our terminal operators and dock workers are doing a great job at moving record volumes despite the congestion hindering other parts of the supply chain.”
About the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association (PMSA). The Pacific Merchant Shipping Association (PMSA) is an independent, not-for-profit association focused on global trade. PMSA operates offices in Oakland, Long Beach and Seattle, and represents owners and operators of marine terminals and U.S. and foreign vessels operating throughout the world.