



WEEK 1

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APERATURE & FOCUS

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GLOBAL APERTURE

New [carbon reduction guidelines from the International Maritime Organization](#) that went into effect January 1 will force aging reefer vessels, many that played an important role over the pandemic as capacity became strained, into retirement as regulations become increasingly rigorous over the coming years.

Continued decline in demand has resulted in a high number of blank sailings between Asia and North Europe, [effectively leaving some service loops empty](#) after canceling nearly all vessels that would normally have been deployed for service. Even with rebounding travel from China as its border reopens, airlines appear to be reluctant to meet that demand [with inbound services seeing little increase](#) and many countries adding new mandates for international travelers amid China's surging Covid rates.

REGIONAL FOCUS - AMERICAS

On December 31, after delivering close to 12,000 shots over the last two years, the Port of Long Beach [ended its program that gave free vaccinations to seafarers](#). The Port of Houston's Sustained Import Dwell Fee, approved in October of 2022 for containers that linger for more than 8 days, [has set a start date of February 1](#) in response to sustained high cargo volumes. Nearly two-thirds of cargo flights are under threat of disruption at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport where, in a move to enforce new contract rules, the city of Chicago has [threatened to revoke the licenses](#) of any cargo-processing contractor that does not open to union organizers. For the first time since the pandemic's onset in 2020, [warehouse leasing declined sharply at the end of 2022](#) with buyers opting to stock less inventory as demand continues to decline.

REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

Even with the continued demand lapse, China's surge in Covid cases is still causing delays as [many manufacturers slow their production schedules](#) with most of the labor force unable to work. Infections have also [significantly impacted the trucking sector and port activities](#) in Shenzhen and Shanghai with congestion now spreading to Ningbo and Qingdao. The infection rate has not affected China's easing of Covid restrictions as they continue to enact policies out of line with previous containment measures; on January 8, [China has opted to stop all Covid monitoring on imported cold-chain foods](#).

REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Belgium's [Brussels-Willebroek Canal](#), a major freight corridor between the port of Antwerp and Brussels, has been closed to shipping since December 30 when a bridge was struck by a chemical tanker. Germany's Kiel Canal, one of the busiest routes in Europe that connects the Baltic and North Seas, [is open once again](#) as of January 3 after a blockage was cleared from an oil spill that shut it down for nearly two weeks.

Fresh off the heels of a new labor deal following two union-organized walkouts, [the Port of Felixstowe became the first in Europe to employ autonomous vehicles](#) by entering two driverless trucks into service to transport containers between terminals. In response to sometimes days-long queues at the port of Dover that arose from complications post-Brexit, the UK's Department for Transportation [began a new program to offer relief](#) with food, water, and adequate facilities to drivers while the area's transport infrastructure is being updated.