These internships are designed to enable public sector participants to better understand: 1) how these industries’ supply chains work; 2) how are transportation decisions made and who makes them; 3) what drives decisions; 4) how does the industry manage or contend with transportation problems and issues; 5) what critical situations require immediate changes to modes, routes, or schedules; 6) the impact of transportation infrastructure conditions; 7) the importance of the on-time performance of the industry’s supply chains and distribution networks; and 8) the economic and policy environments that shape the supply chains. This may be accomplished through focused questions and discussions with responsible industry staff and firsthand observation.

**Industry Description – Warehouses and Distribution Centers:** may receive parts, raw materials, and/or finished products and distribute them to end users, manufacturers, stores, and/or consumers. They may receive or ship a variety of items or a single commodity in each shipment. Warehouse and distribution centers may also provide some Third Party Logistics (3PL) functions (assembling goods, packaging and pricing them, controlling shipping etc.).

**Prior to the Internship:** Gather general information on the host company.

**Research/contact the host facility**
- Identify the type of facility in which you may be working. If interning at a distribution center or warehouse, ask to whom do they deliver, e.g., to stores, manufacturers, consumers, or a combination; is there a flow through operation?
- If interning at a wholesale facility, ask if it is also used as a storage facility; are there specific goods that the center ships or receives?
- What is the service area of the facility; is it local, regional, or national? What are the operating hours for the facility; if it is a 24 hour operation, what are the shift schedules?

**Coordinate and clear your proposed activities with the host company**
- Schedule and clear all internship activities with a host company official (including participation in meetings, observations, rides with drivers, and interviews) prior to the internship.

**During the Internship:**

**Meet with the Vice President of Government Affairs** (or someone of comparable position) to determine the potential activities to observe.
- How does their supply chain work; what comes into the facility and what is shipped out; where does it come from and go to?
- Understand their employees
  - What are the critical roles of the logistics (transportation, distribution, supply chain) staff and what is the organizational structure?
  - What are the critical roles and organizational structure of the rest of their company and how do they interact with the logistics staff?
- What are the critical supply chain decisions being made and is the role of government affairs, logistics, finance, customs compliance and other key staff in making those decisions?
- How does the supply chain and transportation impact customer satisfaction?
- How do key issues impact their business and its operations
  - Fuel prices
  - Increase or decrease in demand for products (economy)
  - Seasonal impacts
- How does their business operate today compared to the past; one year ago, five years ago, or more
  - Can a significant change in operations be defined at some point in time and what was the impact of that change on transportation?
- Is the host familiar with the role of the public sector (agencies/organizations) in transportation decisions and do they understand how these decisions can affect their operation
  - If yes, does the host interact with the public transportation agencies/organizations; how and why?
  - If no, frame a discussion around this point to determine if there is a benefit to the host interacting with the public transportation agencies/organizations.
- Do they participate in an organization or association that may interact with public sector transportation agencies; can they describe the benefits?
Discuss the intern’s public sector job function
- What types of decisions are made by the FTII participant; how may these decisions impact this company’s performance
- How can participant or agency better communicate with this company and vice versa
- What can be done to improve transportation efficiency for the industry

Meet with the logistics organization
- What modes, volumes, and schedules are used to ship materials into and out of the facility
- Where do the parts, raw materials, and product(s) that are shipped to the warehouse/distribution center come from
- Are there any other stops (from the distribution center to the wholesale/retailer); do the materials leave the warehouse/distribution center and go directly to the wholesale/retailer
- What is the final destination of the product(s)
- How much of the company’s business is geared towards JIT delivery; what are advantages/disadvantages of JIT
- What is the process for scheduling the distribution of goods
- Does the demand for the distribution of goods fluctuate on a daily basis (e.g., during peak rush hour traffic) as well as seasonally (e.g., higher demand during the holiday season); how does the host industry adjust to accommodate these factors
- How do they decide where and when trucks come and go from the facility; what is the process for getting trucks in and out of the facilities
- What criteria are used to determine which mode (air, rail, truck, or water) are used

Meet with Warehouse/Distribution Center Operations
- What steps are taken to ensure sufficient truck access to the warehouse/distribution center
- What measures are applied to reduce truck congestion within the property and nearby
- Are they aware of transportation infrastructure improvements that could improve operations (e.g., lengthening an airport runway, adding more access routes/lanes for inbound and outbound truck traffic, etc.)
- How do they evaluate transportation related performance
  - Productivity:
    o On time shipment
    o Truck turn-around time
    o on time delivery
    o transportation cost
    o traffic-related transportation delay
    o Day-to-day, week-to-week, year-to-year variability/comparison
  - Safety & Maintenance:
    o Equipment down time
    o maintenance, repair and operating cost

If receiving or shipping internationally, meet with the Customs compliance department
- Ask about the processes involved in receiving, screening, and distributing their products

Observe inbound, internal, and outbound operations
- What products and materials are being shipped into and out of the facility; when and how
- What percent of the incoming products are returns
- What prompts a change in mode, schedule, or route
- What are the receiving and shipping processes, any unique handling characteristics
- How do they adapt or change; who makes the decision; how is it communicated; how quickly is it implemented

Conclusion of Internship:
- Lessons learned from the internship experience should be shared by both the host and participant with the public agency and host company
- Identify opportunities for collaboration in the future

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