

CASE STUDY

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Railcar Pipe Transport

Company Profile

A U.S. logistics company that services the energy sector by providing pipe logistics, storage and staging.

Business Challenge

The primary challenge for this project was to create a process to facilitate the efficient loading and securement of pipes of varying diameters, coatings, weights and lengths to rail cars in a non-standard loading location while complying with railroad rules. Per AAR Open Top Loading Rules (OTLR), special attention was required in order to properly secure the assorted pipe for transportation from field storage to the loading site by truck. The secondary challenge was the limited time frame due to weather. Commitment to the customer's southern tier delivery schedule needed to factor in time for winter weather to clear and compliance with frost law regulations to ensure safe delivery.

Solution

BNSF Logistics' engineers worked with BNSF Railway to determine the correct Figure Load layouts to safely and efficiently move the pipe. Engineering calculated the pipe weights to maximize the amount that could be loaded on to each car and offered alternative layouts for the odd number of lengths and weights of pipes at the end of the load out. The team worked to provide all possible load figures for the field to meet AAR Open Top Loading Rules (OTLR) standards. BNSF Logistics coordinated with BNSF Railway operations and network planning to set up a unit train operation that provided expedited service for the pipe movements and return of empty cars for reloading.

Process/Procedure

After evaluation of the challenges, BNSF Logistics' engineering team:

- Created color-coded drawings for the loading of pipe, per acceptable AAR Open Top Loading Rules (OTLR) and provided drawings to all field crew supervisors
- Made field site visits to advise on best loading procedures and adapt to issues presented by the field crew
- Created and implemented railcar pre-inspection and railcar securement checklists
- Collaborated with BNSF Logistics' safety team and leadership to ensure safe operation and minimize injuries and delays
- Maintained continual communication with securement field supervisors to regularly address and reevaluate procedures
- Collaborated with BNSF Railway to verify our procedure, securement, and final inspections

Benefits Achieved

- Successfully increased the number of loads per day from 6 cars to 10 cars per week
- Zero load shifts or damaged pipe on all 850 loaded car shipments
- Opened a new revenue source opportunity and established strong relationships between the customer and BNSF Railway to facilitate future success

