



**Newsletter No. 55 (EN)**

**Trade Terms in International Sale of Goods  
and International Commercial Terms  
(INCOTERMS)**

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## I. What are Trade Terms?

Every sale of goods contract should include terms which govern key trade issues such as the time, place and manner of transfer for such goods. These terms are called “trade terms”. In other words trade terms set out the responsibilities of the buyer and seller in regards to the delivery of the goods in question e.g. method of delivery, payment of shipping costs, insurance and customs.

## II. The Use of Trade Terms

As noted above trade terms are used to govern various issues in regards to sales of goods transactions. Over the years standardised predefined trade terms have been developed in order to reduce the negotiation time for such transactions. The most popular of these predefined terms are the ‘International Commercial Terms’ (INCOTERMS).

## III. What are the International Commercial Terms (INCOTERMS)?

INCOTERMS were first introduced by the International Chamber of Commerce in 1936. The INCOTERMS consist of a list of standard trade terms (usually referred to by their abbreviated title) **and** a set of international recognised rules on how such terms should be interpreted in practice. The purpose of the INCOTERMS is to standardise the usage of trade terms in order to reduce uncertainty

and avoid disputes. The most recent version of the INCOTERMS was published in 2010. However older version can still be used if the parties so wish.

## IV. Validity

INCOTERMS will only apply if their application is expressly stated in the sale of goods contract itself or in the relevant offer/quotation, general purchase and sale conditions, order, order confirmations etc. Moreover it is crucial that the aforementioned reference specifically states which version of the INCOTERMS is applicable e.g. “*INCOTERMS 2010*.” Due to the differences between the different versions a reference to just “*INCOTERMS*” can cause numerous problems.

Template delivery clause: “*delivery shall be CIF BANGKOK INCOTERMS 2010.*”

## VI. What do the INCOTERMS cover?

The INCOTERMS define the rights and obligations of the parties with regard to:

- Delivery and transportation documentation (or equivalent electronic notifications);
- Allocation of costs for freight, taxes, duties, insurance, etc.; and
- Transfer of risk.

INCOTERMS do not govern:

- The transfer of ownership and other rights arising from ownership;

- Breaches of contract and the consequences thereof;
- Description or quality of goods;
- The timing and method of payment;
- Choice of law; or
- Issues related to forwarders /carriers.

## VII. Categories of INCOTERMS

The INCOTERMS definitions are broadly divided into four groups as follows:

- (1) The E-terms (EXW) under which the seller's only responsibility is to make the goods available to the buyer at the seller's premises;
- (2) The F-terms (FCA, FAS and FOB) under which the seller must deliver the goods to a carrier who is appointed by the buyer;
- (3) The C-terms (CFR, CIF, CPT and CIP) under which the seller must arrange the transportation of the goods but does not assume the risk of loss or damage to the goods or of any additional costs which arise due to events which occur after shipment/dispatch; and
- (4) The D-terms (DAT, DAP, and DDP) under which the seller bears all the costs and risks of delivering the goods to their final destination.

## VIII. Most Frequently Used INCOTERMS

Please note that the terms FOB and CFR which are discussed below mainly apply to

contracts which use maritime and inland waterway transport, however, they can also be agreed upon in case of air freight.

### 1. Ex Works ("EXW")

#### (1) Delivery

The seller must pack the goods using appropriate packaging and then make the goods available at their premises for the buyer's collection at the agreed time. If no specific location within the seller's premises has been agreed, then the seller may select the location which is most convenient for him. The risk of loss or damage to the goods passes to the buyer as soon as the seller fulfils the delivery obligation i.e. when the goods are placed at the buyer's disposal.

#### (2) Transport and Insurance

The seller has no obligation in relation to transportation or insurance. The buyer is responsible for these matters.

#### (3) Custom formalities

The buyer must obtain any requisite export and import documentation and complete all export and import custom formalities at their own expense.

EXW places the least obligations on the seller, as the buyer has to bear all costs and risks involved in removing the goods from the seller's premises.

## 2. Free On Board (“FOB”)

### (1) Delivery

Under this term the seller’s delivery obligation extends to ensuring that the goods (properly packaged) are safely placed on board the buyer’s appointed vessel in a manner which is customary for the port of shipment. As soon as the goods have passed over the ship’s rail the seller’s obligation is fulfilled. Up until that point the seller bears all the risks for the goods.

### (2) Transport and Insurance

The vessel must be provided and contracted by the buyer at their own expense. Equally the buyer must arrange and bear the cost of any insurance coverage.

### (3) Custom formalities

The seller must obtain any requisite export documentation and complete all export custom formalities at their own expense. Equally the buyer must obtain any requisite import documentation and complete all import custom formalities at their own expense.

## 3. Cost and Freight (“CFR”)

### (1) Delivery

The nature of delivery and the passing of the risk is the same as for FOB.

### (2) Transport and Insurance

The seller must arrange and bear the cost of transporting the goods to the named port of destination. However, the seller is

not obliged to take out an insurance policy for the goods.

### (3) Custom formalities

The nature of this obligation is identical as that for FOB.

Please note that many traders continue to use the traditional abbreviation ‘C&F’ when they refer to the above obligations. However any contract which says “C&F INCOTERMS” will be assumed to refer to the definition of C&F found in INCOTERMS 1980. This definition is substantially different from the INCOTERMS 2010 definition of CFR. Thus it is strongly recommended that the parties use the correct abbreviation i.e. CFR in order to avoid any unexpected confusion or dispute.

## 4. Cost, Insurance and Freight (“CIF”)

### (1) Delivery

The nature of delivery and passing of risk for CIF is the same as that for FOB.

### (2) Transport and Insurance

The seller is obligated to procure and bear the cost of transport and ‘minimum insurance cover of the Institute Cargo Clause’ for the goods in question to the named port of destination. If the buyer requires additional insurance they must bear the relating cost themselves.

### (3) Custom formalities

The nature of this obligation is the same as that for CFR.

## **IX. Conclusion**

When negotiating an international sales contract, both parties need to pay attention to the trade terms. Each party must be aware of the extent of their responsibilities as agreeing to certain trade terms may result in additional costs. The INCOTERMS can be very helpful in that they define each party's exact responsibilities and risks and thus help to speed up the process of trade negotiations. However, INCOTERMS should be applied carefully, specifically the parties should ensure that the exact version of INCOTERMS used reflects their real intentions.

*We hope that the information provided in this brochure was helpful for you.  
If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.*

**Michael Lorenz**  
**(German Attorney at Law)**  
**c/o SALGER Rechtsanwälte**  
Darmstädter Landstrasse 125  
60598 Frankfurt, Germany  
Tel: +49 (0) 69 66 408 80  
E-Mail: frankfurt@lorenz-partners.com

	<b>Ex Works/ EXW</b>	<b>Free On Board/FOB</b>	<b>Cost and Freight/CFR</b>	<b>Cost, Insurance &amp; Freight/CIF</b>
<b>Responsibility</b>				
<b>Warehouse Storage</b>	Seller	Seller	Seller	Seller
<b>Export Packing</b>	Seller	Seller	Seller	Seller
<b>Loading Charges</b>	Buyer	Seller	Seller	Seller
<b>Inland Freight</b>	Buyer	Seller	Seller	Seller
<b>Terminal Charges</b>	Buyer	Seller	Seller	Seller
<b>Forwarder's Fees</b>	Buyer	Buyer	Seller	Seller
<b>Loading Onto Vessel</b>	Buyer	Seller	Seller	Seller
<b>Ocean/Air Freight</b>	Buyer	Buyer	Seller	Seller
<b>Duty, Taxes &amp; Customs Clearance for Export</b>	Buyer	Seller	Seller	Seller
<b>Charges On Ar- rival at Destina- tion</b>	Buyer	Buyer	Buyer	Buyer
<b>Duty, Taxes &amp; Customs Clearance for Import</b>	Buyer	Buyer	Buyer	Buyer