

## Alabama Transportation

Alabama's comprehensive transportation network offers the easy interfacing of all modes of travel and shipping through five interstate highways, six commercial airports, five Class I railroads, a deep-water port, the largest inland waterway system in the nation, and ten inland ports.

No matter what an industry's needs might be, Alabama presents a selection of locations offering the right mix of convenience and cost-efficiency.

### **Air Transportation System**

Alabama has 84 public use airports and 52 licensed heliports. Through the Alabama Airport Program, small cities can develop airports for industrial and other civil use without federal control or financial encumbrances. Most airports are lighted.

Alabama is served by six major commercial airlines and eight commuter airlines operating through six airports. International flights are easily accessible via direct flights from major connecting cities. In addition, Alabama is located between two of the country's largest air freight centers - Memphis and Atlanta.



Five Alabama cities - Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville, Mobile, and Montgomery - have foreign trade zones with direct access to their air transportation system. Each foreign trade zone has been designated for the promotion of international commerce through the duty-free, quota-free entry of foreign goods under U.S. Customs supervision.

### **Highway System**

Alabama lies at the crossroads of the Sunbelt. Five interstate highways converge in Alabama. They are supported by 23,530 miles of federal highways and a total of 93,340 miles of all-weather roads.

Alabama's road conditions rank third best in the nation according to a 2001 study by *The Road Information Program*, a Washington, D.C.-based highway transportation nonprofit research group. The survey ranked states by extra vehicle costs accrued by motorists due to poor road conditions.

The state is served by more than 10,000 interstate and intrastate commercial motor carriers and almost 1,600 truck and warehousing firms all in a highly competitive and cost-effective way. Birmingham, located in the center of its region, serves as a hub for one-day shipping to most of the Deep South. Cities as far as Milwaukee, Omaha, Buffalo, and Philadelphia lie within a normal two-day delivery zone for Birmingham shippers.

### **Railroad System**

Annually, 28 railroad companies serve more than 450 Alabama communities, carrying 93.5 million tons of cargo to in-state facilities over 4,728 miles of track. Excellent main line connections give shippers good access to all major market centers.

There are five Class I railroads that operate in Alabama: Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Co., Canadian National/Illinois Central Railroad Co., CSX Transportation, Inc., The Kansas City Southern Railway, and Norfolk Southern Corporation. The remaining 23 companies are Class III, or shortline, railroads interconnected with the main line routes.

From Birmingham, normal rail delivery time is only two days to Houston, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Washington, DC and most of the greater southeastern U.S., Dallas, Kansas City, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh and the mid-eastern U.S. are only three days delivery time.

## Waterway System

Alabama has approximately **1,500 miles of navigable inland waterways along six corridors**, giving it the **second longest such system in the United States**. These water corridors connect to over 15,000 miles of inland waterways in 23 states via the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. Eleven state-managed dock facilities, as well as seven other facilities owned and operated by local governments or private interests, are located along these waterways. All waterways and the associated locks and dams are operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The six navigable waterways in Alabama are:

- **Alabama-Coosa Waterway** – links Montgomery and the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway (and subsequently the Port of Mobile, Mobile Bay and the Gulf of Mexico) via the Alabama River.
- **Chattahoochee-Apalachicola Waterway** – links the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway / Gulf of Mexico and Phenix City via the Chattahoochee River (known as the Apalachicola River within Florida).
- **Tennessee Waterway** – links Knoxville, Tennessee and the Ohio River (and subsequently the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico) via the Tennessee River.
- **Warrior-Tombigbee Waterway** – links Port Birmingham and the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway at Demopolis (and subsequently the Port of Mobile, Mobile Bay and the Gulf of Mexico) via the Black Warrior River.
- **Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway** – links the Tennessee River in the northwest corner of the state (and subsequently the Ohio River and the Mississippi River) and the Gulf of Mexico via a manmade canal, the Tombigbee River, the Mobile River, the Port of Mobile and Mobile Bay).
- **Gulf Intracoastal Waterway** – serves the Alabama coast, extending from Texas to Florida, where it connects with the intracoastal waterway serving the Atlantic coast of the United States.



### The Port Of Mobile

The Port of Mobile interconnects with major ports around the world. It is served by over 100 overseas shipping lines and by a dozen towing companies that serve the inland and coastal waterways. Five major railroads and more than 65 trucking firms also service the port facilities. Two Interstate systems are located within one-half mile of the State Docks.

The port's main channel, already one of the deepest of any southern port, was deepened to 45 feet/13.7 meters in 1990. The Theodore Ship Channel branches off to a new industrial area. The distance between the port's main facilities and the open sea is a straight 32 miles. Shipping times from Key West or the Yucatan channel to Mobile are much shorter than the comparable times to other major Gulf ports.

The principal dock facilities at Mobile are owned by the State of Alabama. The \$600 million complex is situated on a 3,500-acre site and is among the nation's busiest and finest. The port is undergoing a \$300 million modernization program.

State Docks' facilities provide a compact arrangement of piers and warehouses with shipside railway tracks connecting to an adjacent interchange yard. There are 36 cargo piers including a bulk material handling plant, grain elevators, a container port, a modern roll-on/roll-off dock, and one of the finest coal exporting/importing facilities in the world. The Alabama State Docks Department's complete service for shippers includes intermodal transfer and handling, warehousing and security. Through its Inland Docks Division, the Department also operates terminals at ten locations along the state's waterways. Among the inland water systems, Alabama's Tombigbee, Black Warrior and Tennessee rivers connect shipping companies with major U.S. waterway systems. Additionally, Docks' customers find accessibility to the Intracoastal Waterway off Mobile Bay, which provides shippers protected water routes from Texas to Maine.