

SERVICE GUIDE

The On Board Courier Guide: When to Use It, How It Runs, What You Must Prepare

For supply chain and logistics leaders who need a shipment on the next flight — and need to know exactly what that takes before they commit.

• Service Guide • FlashGL • 2026

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An On Board Courier is a vetted courier who hand-carries your shipment on the next available commercial flight and does not let go of it until someone signs. No cargo terminal. No warehouse dwell. No consolidation queue.

That one change — one person, one unbroken chain of custody — is what compresses a multi-leg international move into **6 to 24 hours door-to-door**.

This guide sets out what OBC is, the hard limits that decide whether it fits your shipment, the four steps from request to signed handover, the packaging and documents you must have ready before a courier knocks, the three validated temperature bands, and how an actual 240-box Bangkok to Detroit run was executed. Every figure here is a FlashGL operating specification. Where we do not have a figure, we say so.

| OBC in four numbers

≤ 200 kg Per courier	6–24 h Door-to-door	10 min Quote and flight plan	120+ Countries covered
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| When OBC is the right tool

• Line-down components

A production line is stopped and one component is missing. The courier ticket costs less than the next hour of idle capacity. This is the single most common OBC trigger.

• Clinical and pharma deadlines

Trial material, investigational drug, or a batch with a hard administration window. Temperature is validated end to end and logged — not just monitored.

• High value, small footprint

Semiconductor wafers and masks, prototypes, calibration instruments, signed contracts. Value density is high, volume is low, and custody cannot be broken.

• Samples, tooling and show material

Trade show samples, first-article parts, tooling inserts that must be on a specific bench by a specific shift. The deadline is a date, not a service level.

| Four steps, one accountable owner

01

Submit your request

Send origin, destination, piece count, weight, dimensions, commodity and the deadline that actually matters. We return a confirmed flight plan and a quote within 10 minutes.

02

Courier dispatch and check-in

A background-checked, bonded courier collects the shipment, applies a tamper-evident seal in your presence, and checks in on the next available flight.

03

In-flight escort

The courier hand-carries the shipment on board. While it is airborne, our brokers prepare destination pre-clearance so nothing waits at the customs counter.

04

Pre-clearance and handover

Landed, released, delivered to the named recipient with signed chain-of-custody confirmation and photographic proof of delivery.

OBC against NFO, AOG and charter

FACTOR	OBC (ON BOARD COURIER)	NFO (NEXT FLIGHT OUT)	AOG (AIRCRAFT ON GROUND)
AIR CHARTER			
Weight	≤ 200 kg per courier	≤ 2,000 kg per shipment	No upper limit
Set by aircraft type			
Dimensions	Sum of 3 sides < 180 cm	Per airline AQR restrictions	ATA 300 packaging standard
Set by aircraft type			
Door-to-door	6–24 hours	24–48 hours	4–12 hours
Mobilisation	Quote and flight plan in 10 minutes	Quote in 10 minutes	Activated in 15 minutes
Custody	One courier, physical, unbroken	Airline cargo handling at both ends	Courier escort, delivered direct to the MRO
Dedicated crew and aircraft			
Documents	Invoice, packing list, AWB, commodity licences	AWB, export declaration, import entry	AOG pre-clearance, CoC, AWB
Charter agreement plus the standard import/export set			
Cost profile	Highest per kg — you are buying a seat and a person	Materially lower per kg than OBC	Quoted against aircraft-on-ground urgency
Priced per aircraft; economical only when volume fills the hold			

Best for	One small piece, an extreme deadline, high value or high sensitivity	200–2,000 kg, multi-piece cargo, deadlines measured in one to two days	A grounded aircraft and a clock counted in minutes
Volume or geometry that scheduled capacity cannot take			

AOG figures are shown so you can triage a request correctly — the AOG desk runs its own 24/7 protocol. Charter weight, dimensions and transit time are quoted per aircraft and per lane, so ask us for a charter quote rather than comparing it against these fixed figures.

When OBC is the wrong tool

Book NFO instead when a single piece exceeds 200 kg, when the three sides add up to 180 cm or more, when the shipment is not genuinely time-critical, or when the commodity cannot travel as accompanied baggage. Call the AOG desk when an aircraft is grounded — that desk mobilises in 15 minutes and runs to a 4–12 hour clock. Ask for a charter when volume or geometry exceeds what scheduled capacity can lift on your date. We route to the mode that fits. We do not sell OBC by default.

Packaging standards by commodity

COMMODITY	PACKAGING REQUIREMENT	SEALING AND PROOF
Semiconductor wafers, masks, instruments	Anti-static, shock-isolated case inside a rigid outer shell	Tamper-evident seal; photographic confirmation at every handover
Pharmaceuticals and clinical trial material	Qualified shipper validated for 2–8°C, 15–25°C or frozen	Data logger record uploaded every 10 minutes; GDP-compliant audit trail
Aircraft spares	ATA 300 certified container	Certificate of Conformity attached; custody record through to the MRO
Automotive prototypes and tooling	Rigid crate or flight case with internal bracing	Tamper-evident seal; cargo insurance to declared value
Dangerous goods	IATA DGR-compliant packaging, marking and labelling	DGR declaration filed by trained staff before the shipment is tendered
Documents, samples, small high-value parts	Rigid lockable case	Sealed in the courier's presence; continuous physical custody

If your commodity is not listed, send photographs of the packed item at the quote stage. Repacking at the airport is the most common reason a booked flight is missed.

Before pickup: have these ready

Have this list complete before you call. Missing items — not flight availability — are the most common cause of a missed departure.

- ☐ Pickup address, plus an on-site contact name and mobile number
- ☐ Piece count, and the weight and dimensions of every single piece
- ☐ Commodity description in plain language, and the HS code if you already have it

- ☐ Commercial invoice and packing list, showing the value you want insured
- ☐ Any licence, permit or dual-use / controlled goods documentation
- ☐ Delivery address, named recipient, and the deadline that actually matters
- ☐ Required temperature band, if the shipment is temperature-controlled
- ☐ Dangerous goods classification and DGR documentation, if applicable

Documents: who provides what

DOCUMENT	PROVIDED BY	WHY IT MATTERS
Commercial invoice	Shipper	Sets declared value, tariff classification and the duty basis
Packing list	Shipper	Piece count, weights and dimensions checked against the airline allowance
Air waybill (AWB)	FlashGL	Contract of carriage and your tracking reference
Certificate of Origin	Shipper	Required for preferential duty treatment on many lanes
Import / export licence	Shipper	Mandatory for controlled, dual-use and strategic goods
HS code classification	FlashGL brokers	Accurate classification across all 97 chapters prevents reclassification holds
Certificate of Conformity	Shipper, for aircraft spares	Airworthiness evidence for AOG parts
Temperature record	FlashGL	Data logger trace for GDP audit
DGR declaration	Prepared by FlashGL to IATA DGR	Required before any dangerous goods are tendered

Dual-end customs clearance is included. Our licensed brokers classify the HS code and prepare the declaration before the courier boards, so the shipment is pre-cleared on arrival rather than queued.

Three validated temperature bands

- **2–8°C**

Refrigerated. Vaccines, biologics and most clinical trial material. Qualified shipper, calibrated data logger, GDP-compliant record from pickup to signature.

- **15–25°C**

Controlled ambient. Active pharmaceutical ingredients, diagnostics and devices that are damaged by cold excursions as easily as by heat.

- **Frozen**

Dry ice or phase-change media, handled under IATA DGR. Confirm the exact set-point when you request the quote — the band is locked at booking, not on the day.

Custody, insurance and seals — what you actually get

Every OBC shipment carries cargo insurance up to the declared value, a tamper-evident seal applied in the courier's presence, and a documented chain of custody: background-checked and bonded couriers, real-time GPS tracking, and a photographic confirmation at every handover. If the seal number on arrival does not match the seal number recorded at pickup, the shipment was opened — and you will know the moment it happens, not three days later.

Case: Bangkok to Detroit — 240 boxes, two couriers

Jul 4 · 11:09 ● **Inquiry received**

240 boxes, Thailand to the United States, door-to-airport handover at Detroit (DTW).

Jul 4 · 11:36 ● **Quote issued**

27 minutes from the first message, with the BKK → ICN → DTW routing confirmed. Client authorised at 11:51 the same morning.

Jul 5 · 11:00 ● **Pickup in Bangkok**

240 boxes collected and split into two 120-box consignments. One courier cannot carry the full volume within airline allowances — this is the 200 kg limit in practice.

Jul 5 · 17:18 ● **Export customs cleared**

Bangkok export formalities completed 6 h 18 min after pickup.

**Jul 5 · 21:56 /
Jul 6 · 00:05** ● **Two flights, two couriers**

KE658 and KE652, Bangkok to Seoul. Each consignment travels with its own courier, each under its own seal.

**Jul 6 · 04:53 /
07:12** ● **Both consignments reach ICN**

Consolidated onto DL158 for the transpacific leg, custody confirmed at the transfer.

Jul 6 · 10:43 ● **ICN to DTW**

DL158 departs Seoul. Arrival at Detroit is logged at 10:27 local — earlier on the clock because of the time zone change.

Jul 6 · 13:53 ● Handover at DTW

26 h 53 min door-to-airport. 50 h 44 min from first inquiry. 19 milestones tracked and communicated, zero loss, on-time handover.

| Frequently asked questions

Q How much weight can one OBC courier carry?

Up to 200 kg, with the sum of the three sides under 180 cm. Above that, you either split the volume across multiple couriers — the Bangkok case ran two couriers at 120 boxes each — or the shipment moves as NFO.

Q Which countries can you run OBC to?

120+ countries. Primary corridors cover Asia Pacific, Europe, North and South America, the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. Send the city pair and we confirm the corridor, the routing and the quote within 10 minutes.

Q How is customs handled, and how is duty calculated?

Dual-end, included. Our licensed brokers classify the HS code and file the declaration before the courier boards, so the shipment is pre-cleared on arrival. Duty and tax depend on commodity, origin and destination — we quote the landed figure against your actual commodity data rather than a generic estimate.

Q Can OBC carry dangerous goods?

Yes, when they are declared at the request stage and packed, marked and labelled to IATA DGR. Our staff are IATA DGR trained. Undeclared dangerous goods stop a shipment at check-in — declare them on the first call and we route around the constraint.

Q How fast can you dispatch, and is cold chain available on every flight?

Quote and confirmed flight plan within 10 minutes of your request; pickup timing then depends on flight availability and on how quickly the document list above is complete. All three temperature bands are available on OBC, but not every aircraft and lane supports every band — confirm the set-point when you request the quote.

Get a flight plan in 10 minutes

Send us the city pair, piece count, weight, dimensions and your real deadline. We come back with a routing, a courier and a quote. If OBC is not the right tool for your shipment, we will say so and route it to NFO, AOG or charter instead.

[REQUEST A QUOTE](#)

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