



TOPICS IN THE NEWS:

Supply Chains (February 2022)

INTRODUCTION

[Supply chains](#) are domestic and global networks of complex arrangements involving logistical technologies, transportation systems and human resources that move materials and products from suppliers to manufacturers to retailers and ultimately to buyers. The U.S. supply chain follows a model that reduces the costs of warehousing and distribution, often delivering to retail outlets [‘just in time’](#) to fulfil consumer demand.

Beginning with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in China in late 2019, supply chains suffered an [unprecedented shock](#) that produced cascading effects at all levels of the economy as evidenced by long lines of cargo ships waiting to unload, warehouse shortages, and [unavailability or shipping delays](#) for goods typically delivered in a matter of days. The impact of these logistical issues slowed production in the [automotive industry](#), already compromised by microchip shortages, and healthcare was particularly hit hard by limited availability and slow distribution of medical supplies. Beyond these headline grabbing issues, the crisis is also surfacing in surprising ways, [disrupting school nutrition programs](#) and raising concerns about the [scarcity of paper for ballots and other election materials](#).

The most recent, and unexpected complication to the overstretched supply chain is the [organization of truck drivers in Canada](#), protesting that country’s pandemic regulations. The ensuing [blockades](#) slowed and shut down key border crossings, including the Ambassador Bridge between Windsor and Detroit, bringing a global and national issue [closer to home](#).

Forecasts on when supply chains will normalize are a moving target, but the disruption is predicted to persist through 2022 and likely longer. Even if/when that happens, supply chains will remain at [risk to future disruption](#) due to the inherent complexity of interconnecting IT systems and the [increasing occurrence of cybercrime](#).

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LEARN MORE

- [Ambassador Bridge reopens after Canadian Border crossing protests](#), Bridge Michigan, February 14, 2022.
- [Whitmer Demands Canada Stop Blockade On Ambassador Bridge](#), Gongwer, February 10, 2022

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- [A normal supply chain? It's 'unlikely' in 2022](#), New York Times, February 1, 2022.
 - Dayen, David; Mabud, Rakeen; [How we broke the supply chain](#), The American Prospect, January 31, 2022
 - [Pandemic Pushes Just-in-Time Supply Chain Model to the Brink](#), NCSL State Legislatures News, November 5, 2021
 - Norton, Stephen J., "[Should Biden continue on a protectionist path?](#)", U.S Trade Policy, July 16, 2021.
 - [Global Supply Chains in a Post-Pandemic World](#), Harvard Business Review, September-October 2020.

WATCH AND LISTEN

- [The Indicator: supply chain solutions](#), NPR Planet Money podcast, January 6, 2022.
- [Canada trucker protest halts commerce at the U.S. border, slows supply chain for auto industry](#), Here & Now, February 11, 2022.
- [Truckers blocking the Canada-U.S. Border could seriously impact supply chain](#), NPR All Things Considered, February 10, 2022.