
Understanding International Trade Statistics



U.S. international trade statistics are published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Foreign Trade Division. This is the only official source of such statistics in the United States. For the most complete and detailed information, please check their [“Guide to Foreign Trade Statistics.”](#)

Merchandise Trade

Florida’s international merchandise trade consists of those goods that are shipped to, from, and through Florida. For example, Florida merchandise exports can either originate in our state, or they can originate in another state, but are exported through one of Florida’s two Customs Districts. Florida merchandise imports may either stay in Florida, or they may be transported on to another destination in the United States, or even shipped to another foreign country.

Origin of Movement (OM) Series / Florida-Origin Exports

The [Origin of Movement](#) series provides export statistics based on the “state from which the merchandise starts its journey to the port of export; that is, the data reflect the transportation origin of exports.” While the Census Bureau points out that this does not represent the “production origin,” it is generally accepted that this is the closest approximation of individual U.S. states’ exports available. Therefore, Florida-origin exports are deemed to be Florida goods that are exported to other countries, regardless of how they were shipped to their destinations.

Florida’s Customs Districts

The state of Florida is comprised of two U.S. Customs Districts, [Customs District 52 \(Miami\) and Customs District 18 \(Tampa\)](#).

Florida Trade with Canada and Mexico

Florida exports destined for Canada and Mexico are much more likely to be trucked over the U.S. border instead of being put on a ship or airplane to be transported. Such shipments are considered exports of the Customs District that the goods actually leave from. Therefore, Florida’s merchandise trade with Canada and Mexico is generally under-reported. To get a better picture of Florida exports to these two countries, one should refer to the Origin of Movement Series that reports Florida-origin exports. Florida-origin exports to Canada and Mexico will rank these two countries much higher than the merchandise trade data will. In fact, they are both ranked among Florida’s top five destinations for Florida-origin exports.

To learn more about the unique relationship between Florida and Canada, please visit the website of the [Consulate General of Canada in Miami](#) and view the [2018 Canada-Florida Economic Impact Study](#).