

PREVENTION OF PEST CONTAMINATION OF CONTAINERS: JOINT INDUSTRY GUIDELINES FOR THE CLEANING OF CONTAINERS – UPDATED

The **Bureau International des Containers**, the **Container Owners Association**, the **Institute of International Container Lessors**, and the **World Shipping Council (WSC)** – joined this time also by the **International Cargo Handling Coordination Association** – **have released the latest version of the easy-to-use best practices to avoid carrying unwanted stowaways.** “Every year, 250 million containers are transported across the world with food, clothes, electronics and other goods we all need. While crucial for the smooth functioning of the global supply chain, containers and their cargoes can also harbour and transfer contaminating

pests. [...] Experience shows that the introduction of new pests can severely upset an existing ecosystem, with serious ecological consequences and possibly billion dollar impacts on a nation’s economy,” the parties highlighted in a press release. **Lars Kjaer**, Senior Vice President of WSC, added, “Each party in the international container supply chain has a custodial responsibility to make sure cargo and containers are clean when they arrive and when they leave their care. If we all live up to these standards, containers will reach their destination faster, and our agriculture, forestry and natural resources will be protected.”

TT CLUB JOINS TFG

The freight insurance specialist has become a part of the **UK’s Department for Transport** industry-led **Task and Finish Group (TFG)**, set up to explore raising standards in truck parking facilities to improve driver welfare and cargo security. “TT applauds the UK Government’s initiative and is grateful to add its experience of trends in cargo theft and the modus operandi of criminals in order to encourage adoption of standards at truck stop facilities,” said **Mike Yarwood**, **TT Club’s** Managing Director of Loss Prevention, who chairs one of the working groups looking at parking standards. In recent years, TT Club has ramped up its campaign to increase awareness of the risks associated with overnight parking of trucks, not just in the UK but across Europe as a whole. **The insurer emphasised in a recent report**, penned together with **BSI**, that over 70% of cargo thefts in 2023 around the world were from trucks. TFG offers an opportunity for a unique gathering

of individuals from industry bodies, truck park and motorway service operators, the police force, standards organisations, insurers, and users to explore, identify and understand the blockers to and opportunities for better security and safer rest facilities for those dubbed the ‘knights of the road.’ TFG will survey why those operators of secure facilities adopt current standards, identify the highest crime locations across the last four years, explore greater use of automatic number-plate recognition/closed-circuit television equipment, and map violent crimes against drivers. “The extent to which the UK and EU economies rely on trucking is staggering. As industry stakeholders, we must strive to both increase the safety of drivers and decrease the loss of cargo. That is why it is hoped that this TFG will result in longer-term strategies to improve the current truck parking landscape in the UK, and, in addition, that useful guidance can be offered to EU legislators,” added Yarwood.

MANDATORY REPORTING FOR CONTAINERS LOST AT SEA

During its 108th meeting, the **International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) Maritime Safety Committee** adopted amendments to the **International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)**, mandating as of 1 January 2026 that all containers lost at sea should be reported. “The new regulations, specifically amending SOLAS Chapter V Regulations 31 and 32, mark a significant advancement in maritime safety and environmental protection. By ensuring prompt and detailed reporting of lost and drifting containers, these amendments

will enhance navigational safety, facilitate swift response actions, and mitigate potential environmental hazards,” commented **Lars Kjaer**, Senior Vice President at the **World Shipping Council**. His organisation, in anticipation of introducing mandatory reporting requirements, has since 2008 gathered information from its members on the number of containers lost at sea. **The latest report** speaks of 221 boxes lost in 2023 (with a recovery rate of about 33%), a reduction from the previous lowest-ever loss of 661 the year before.

CARGOES OF CONCERN

The **Cargo Integrity Group** has identified **15 commodities**, commonly carried in containers, that, under certain conditions, can cause dangerous incidents. While these are usually transported safely when regulations and guidelines are followed (such as the **Quick Guide to the CTU Code**), the Group has created this list to highlight cargoes that can become hazardous if mishandled. The industry bodies forming the Group emphasise that cargoes that are mis-declared or have incomplete or incorrect information about their identity are more likely to be involved in incidents. The Cargoes of Concern list is not exhaustive, but each item illustrates a common type of hazard, divided into three categories. First, reactive hazards: these can catch fire and cause significant damage and casualties in specific circumstances. Second, spill or leak risks: these commodities can present a risk if not packed properly or if they are damaged; spills or leaks from such cargoes can harm the health of people cleaning up the spill as well as the environment. Third, improper packing: cargoes that are poorly or incorrectly packed or secured in the container can lead to injuries to personnel or damage to nearby containers, property, or other shipments; such

incidents can cause severe accidents at sea or on land, like truck roll-overs and train derailments. The Cargo Integrity Group also plans to publish additional guidance on the identification and safe handling of these cargoes. “The combined experience of our organisations has been harnessed to identify these categories and result in pinpointing some commodities where the risks are perhaps less obvious. While the potential dangers of transporting, for example, calcium hypochlorite or lithium-ion batteries might be more widely appreciated, the combustible qualities of seed cake or the hazards associated with cocoa butter or vegetable oils, will be less well-known,” shared **Peregrine Storrs-Fox**, Risk Management Director at **TT Club**. **Lars Kjaer**, Senior Vice President of the **World Shipping Council**, added, “Every actor in the global container supply chain is responsible for the health and safety of not only their own people but also those at any onward stage of the container’s journey. Complying with regulations and following the advice in the CTU Code saves lives, and we appeal to everyone shipping, packing and handling commodities that fall within the categories of these Cargoes of Concern to be particularly diligent.”

LEX MARITIMA

After a decade of work under the **Comité Maritime International's (CMI) International Working Group**, the 25 major global principles of maritime law have been put on paper for the very first time. **The Draft CMI Lex Maritima** was prepared on the initiative of Eric Van Hooydonk, a Ghent University Professor and a lawyer in Antwerp. In 2014, he argued in the *Journal of International Maritime Law* that, although the existence of a common Lex Maritima is accepted worldwide, the principles in question have never been precisely identified nor formulated in a set of rules. At the Professor's suggestion, the CMI launched a project to draft the Lex Maritima. Van Hooydonk carried out research on national legal

systems to distil the major, globally accepted common principles from them and drafted the instrument. "It was a fascinating job to search for the deepest, universal core in the vast multitude of international and national maritime rules," he commented. The **Draft CMI Lex Maritima** comprises principles on fundamental issues, such as the interpretation and sources of maritime law, the status, ownership and management of ships, the responsibilities and liabilities of shipowners and operators, the shipmaster, the pilot, the limitation of liability, maritime contracts, chartering agreements and contracts of carriage, collision, salvage, general average, wreck removal, liens and mortgages on ships, arrest and detention of vessels, and time bars.

PARIS MOU PERFORMANCE LIST

The Paris MOU Committee approved at its 57th meeting the 2023 inspection results and adopted new performance lists (in use from 1 July 2024 to calculate the ship risk profile) for Flag States and Recognized Organizations. The **White, Grey and Black (WGB) List** presents the full spectrum, from quality flags to those with poor performance that are considered high or very high risk. The *WGB List* is based on the total number of inspections and detentions during a three-year rolling period for flags with at least 30 inspections in that period. The *White List* represents quality flags with a consistently low detention percentage. Flags with average performance are

shown on the *Grey List*; their inclusion may serve as an incentive to improve and move to the *White List*. "At the same time, flags at the lower end of the *Grey List* should be careful not to neglect control over their ships and risk ending up on the *Black List* the following year," Paris MOU stressed in a press brief. The latest WGB List features 71 flags: 42, 17, and 12, respectively (vs. 2022's 66: 39, 18, and nine in the respective categories). The Baltic Sea region's Denmark tops the *White List*, with Finland in the Best 10 in 6th place. Sweden (15), Germany (21), Estonia (28), Lithuania (34), and Poland (40) are also on the *White List*, whereas Latvia (43) opens the *Grey List*.

THE FUTURE OF MARITIME SAFETY REPORT

The 2024 version of **Inmarsat Maritime's report** reveals that Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) calls decreased by 7.6% in 2023 over the previous year. Despite this decline, the service was still triggered on 788 occasions and remains close to the six-year annual average of 799 calls. As well as providing a snapshot of current safety metrics, Inmarsat wants to use *The Future of Maritime Safety Report* as a call to action for the maritime industry to embrace data sharing and collaborative problem-solving as the sector strives to navigate through significant changes (including the transition to greener propulsion technologies and escalating geopolitical tensions). The report suggests that any concerns regarding data pooling related to confidentiality or reputational damage could be addressed by anonymising casualty and incident data. It recommends that the shipping industry establishes a list of standard data points to monitor and report, including casualties and

incidents, injuries or deaths at sea, and near misses. It also endorses trend analysis to support the development of safety measures, with a particular emphasis on developing risk treatments for well-known and recurring issues. **Peter Broadhurst**, Senior Vice President Safety and Regulatory at Inmarsat Maritime, said, "By harnessing the power of anonymised safety data, we can identify trends, develop specific mitigation measures, and enhance the overall safety of our ships and crews." He furthered, "Although progress has been made, shipping continues to experience significant casualty rates. We collect vast amounts of safety data, yet the current siloed-working model hinders our ability to fully leverage the actionable insights available to us. By pooling data, we can create a more holistic and objective view of maritime safety to inform performance improvements and ultimately reduce the occurrence of preventable safety incidents to save lives at sea."

SEAFARERS GO DIGITAL

The **European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA)** and the **European Transport Workers Federation (ETF)** have launched the initiative in question to identify and address the challenges of digitalisation for shipping and people working offshore. The **Seafarers Go Digital** project recognises the need to adapt international regulations, training programmes, and operational practices so that digital technologies are embraced while the employment rights and well-being of seafarers are safeguarded. The initiative raises awareness in key areas such as onboard digitalisation, cybersecurity, Internet access, e-certification, digital skills, and attractiveness of the maritime profession, putting forward policy recommendations for further cooperation between the industry and the unions, policymakers, and other relevant stakeholders. "Supporting shipping and seafarers in the digital transition is a key priority for European shipowners. We need to ensure that seafarers

are upskilled and reskilled to work safely with the new digital tools and technologies. Digitalisation can help make the profession more attractive and more diverse, offering career opportunities on board and ashore and enhancing the participation of women and underrepresented groups," underscored **Sotiris Raptis**, ECSA's Secretary General. **Livia Spera**, ETF's Secretary General, added, "The Seafarers Go Digital initiative responds to the need to prepare the maritime professionals for the digital age. Having in mind the need to safeguard the rights, welfare and safety of seafarers, we want to promote a fair and inclusive digital transition. Digitalisation can be an opportunity and can help improve the attractiveness of the maritime professions. Through this initiative, we commit to working together to benefit the most from the digital transition while mitigating its risks and contributing to a sustainable and attractive future for seafarers."