

## **CUSTOMER GUIDE - Freight Container Loading**

The following information is provided to customers as a guide only for the loading of freight containers.

### ***Inspecting the Freight Container***

Checking for cleanliness and general acceptability is in the best interest of any user, regardless of whether the container is being loaded with a full load, to carry out a quick inspection prior to loading to ensure that it is structurally sound, and safe to work in and around.

- Holes/Watertight: No obvious holes or tears in the exterior paneling. This is best checked by entering the container and closing both doors. If any spots of light can be seen then water can gain entry;
- Placards and Markings: Remove any placards or markings remaining on the outside of the empty container which refer to the previous cargo should be removed;
- Clean/Dry: No leftovers (sweepings, dust, grease or liquid) from the previous cargo; free of sweat/frost;
- No Infestation: should be no evidence of pests, insects or rodents which might contaminate cargo; and
- Follow Instructions: Any recommendations posted inside the container should be noted.

### ***Loading the Freight Container***

- Prepare a pre-loading plan (stuffing guide) before beginning to load the container so that weight/volume considerations are covered and point loading limits are observed;
- Never load by weight above payload limits of the container, i.e. the cargo and container net weight must not exceed the container's gross safe working load; never load by weight above applicable road regulations;
- Distribute the weight of cargo evenly over the floor of the container; never load heavy items in one section and light items in another (weight of cargo should not exceed the "60% within half the length rule");
- The center of gravity should be within 96 inches (8 feet) from ground level;
- Never smoke, eat, or drink during loading or unloading;
- Observe all handling instructions on cargo such as:  
✓ "Do Not Drop"                      ✓ "This Side Up"                      ✓ "Do Not Stack"                      ✓ "Fragile"
- Do NOT stack heavy goods on top of light goods;
- Mixed loads - Always place packages containing liquid cargo on bottom tiers and dry cargo on top;
- Do not load goods in a container with damaged packaging;
- Do not load wet and damp goods with dry goods;
- Do not load goods with tainting odors with sensitive merchandise;
- Load and secure all cargo tightly;
- Load goods with sharp edges separate from softer merchandise; use dividers and separating material;
- Do not use clamps or other loading devices unless the goods can withstand them;
- Dunnage must be of good quality and of sufficient size and number to easily support load;
- Straps or bands should be rated appropriately for the load carried and should free from cuts, holes, tears or other defects. Straps must not be twisted in a manner that lessens rated strength;
- Straps should have softeners applied where passing over sharp objects;
- Products equipped with tires or round cargo must have chocks/blocks secured against leading and trailing edges. Chocks must be in good condition and secured properly;
- Include all necessary documentation;
- Always observe the DOT/IMDG Code packaging requirements (labels) when loading Dangerous Goods (DG); and

- Always load hazardous cargo near the door where possible.

### ***Post Loading***

When the planned quantity of goods has been loaded in a container, the following checks should be made:

- Restraint: Goods must be arranged and secured to withstand the normal stresses and strains of the journey;
- Security: When doors are shut, all securing lugs must be properly engaged forcing door seal compression;
- Seals: An approved seal must be fitted on the right hand door hasp that has the rounded bolt head; and the seal number recorded all shipping documents. Seals shall comply with ISO standards;
- Contents: Any placard or markings, except those required by regulation, on the outside of the container advertising the contents will attract thieves and should be removed; and
- Labels/Placards: Any packages of Dangerous Goods should be labeled according to DOT/IMDG Code Dangerous Goods requirements, and placards must be affixed on the outside of the container on all four sides in such a way that they do not obscure the container number or inspection plate.