

TT Club Guidelines on Loading General LCL Shipments

(A) What is Safe Stowage and Why:

Ideal freight container stowage serves multiple purposes. It can achieve optimal utilisation of the container capacity; improve the efficiency of loading and unloading; and reduce the transport operator's risks of incurring liability towards customer and third parties.

The general rule of stowage is that it prevents cargo rolling, tipping, and shifting during transit.

The most predictable consequence of improper stowage is customer liability for damage to cargo. However, much worse and dramatic outcomes can ensue in reality. One improperly stowed container with cargoes breaking loose and adrift, for example, can cause damage to the ship or other shipments on board. It may also endanger the life of the seamen or even the entire voyage.

Even if physical damage may not be substantial in the event of an improper stowage, the resulting delay may as well cause financial loss to your customers and third parties. An obstruction to a voyage can be particularly expensive.

In a nutshell, improper stowage can turn an ordinary containerised shipment into Dangerous Goods in legal sense, for which the consignors are strictly liable for the consequence.

The Club would like to summarise the basic safety guidelines as follows to assist Members involved in container stuffing:

(B) Pre-loading Container Checking:

- Read the CSC Safety Approval Plate and identify information like the stack height and maximum load limit
- Ensure the unit is externally sound with operating doors and locks; conduct the spot-light check
- Ensure the unit is internally clean and free from any odour or residue of past shipments
- Ensure no nail is left protruding from the container floor

(C) Loading and Stowage:

- Distribute the cargo load evenly in terms of its weight and area with the overall centre of gravity being as close as possible to the centre of the container floor
- When stowing one tier of cargo over another, make sure the packages of the tier(s) underneath are robust to support the upper tier(s)
- For non-uniform cargoes especially, leave no gaps or spaces in the freight stowage; chock the cargo by filling any spaces with air bags, pallets, or dunnage

- Secure heavy items at the centre of the container floor by timber chocking against both sides and ends of the unit
- Make sure the stowage is compatible and logical when it involves different types of cargoes, such that e.g., heavy items are beneath lighter items; wet items are away from dry items; etc.
- Never attempt to overload the container in cargo quantity and weight, which not only will cause cargo damage, but also danger to third parties
- Do not accept any cargoes of damaged, leaking, or unsound condition for loading
- Ensure the stowage is safe for unloading at the destination without causing danger to cargo handler especially when he opens the container door

The above apply to general consignments. When it comes to special cargoes, Members should pay particular attention to the specific security, stowage, or lashing requirement as necessary.