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UPDATE ON THE USE OF FATs IN VTL OPERATIONS

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Update on the use of FATs in VTL Operations

Members will be aware that ICHCA International Publication TOA#1 has operational guidance on the Vertical Tandem Lifting (VTL) of ISO standard containers and highlights the safety considerations of this practice.

ISO TC 104, the Technical Committee of the UN Standards Organisation also issued an amended ISO 3874 Series 1 Freight Container standard that referred to this operation.

TOA # 1 laid down certain operational requirements and TOA #1A provides a handy list of requirements before any terminal undertakes such operations.

Members will also be aware that the US's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has been involved in Court Action with the Industry over this matter and the latest court ruling exercises further restrictions and requirements on VTL operations. This ruling has been appealed at the US Court of Appeals on the basis that some requirements of the new ruling are operationally difficult; we await the outcome of the Appeal and we will advise members in due course . It is likely that we will have to amend TOA#1 and TOA#1A to reflect this.

Meanwhile allied to operational considerations is the requirement for inter-box connectors that are used in VTL operations. Many members will be familiar with the various types of connector in use today which can be:-

Standard manual twistlocks, latch-locks (single side or double), Semi-automatic twistlocks (SATLs) and Fully Automatic Twistlocks (FATLs).

TOA#1 also introduces the term "LIFT-LOCK", for clarity a liftlock is simply a twistlock that has been certificated as suitable for use in a VTL operation and ONLY lift-locks should be used in VTL operations. The requirements for lift-locks are also contained in the guidance.

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At the recent meeting of ICHCA's International Safety Panel in London, delegates received a presentation from Markus Theuerholz of German Lashing on the characteristics and limitations of FATLs.

One thing is certainly clear from the ISP deliberations and other guidance is that Fully Automatic Twistlocks (FATLs) are NOT suitable for VTL operations *and therefore containers that are connected with FATLs should not be lifted by this method.*

If any member has any query about any aspect of VTL operations and requirements they should contact the Technical Advisor at <u>vtl@ichca.com</u>