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## **HOW WIDE IS A FREIGHT CONTAINER?**

Everyone knows a freight container is 8 feet wide. The problem is that this knowledge is no longer entirely correct.

“Over width” containers, containers that are wider than 8 feet (2438 mm), are seeing use in more and more trades.

Typically these “pallet-wide” containers are about an inch (24 mm) wider than a standard ISO container. This greater width is not visually noticeable and, until now, there are no required markings for these containers to alert individuals seeing them of their greater width. This has changed with the recent publication of the fourth edition of ISO 6346:2022.

There have been a number of incidents and injuries because pallet-wide containers have been assumed to be and have been handled like standard ISO containers.

**SAFETY ALERT**



A recent case in point – a pallet-wide container was removed from a stack of containers in the marine terminal in a US port and loaded onto a yard chassis or “bomb cart” that was built to accommodate standard ISO containers. Unbeknownst to the operators the over-width container became wedged in the bomb cart.

It was moved under the crane to be loaded onto a container ship and, when the crane lifted the container, it also lifted the bomb cart, the attached yard tractor that was pulling the loaded bomb cart and the driver in the tractor, 15 or so feet off the ground. When the container finally separated from the chassis it, and the attached tractor, fell to the ground severely injuring the driver.



a typical bomb cart

**Some lessons learned and recommendations from this incident:**

**Terminal operators:**

- Contact the shipping lines calling at your terminal and ascertain if they are or occasionally carry pallet wide containers.
- Learn how these are identified in the Line’s stowage system and ensure that your system also recognizes these unique containers.

- Ensure your operations personnel are informed when pallet wide containers are in your terminal and that they know to only use suitable equipment to handle them.

### Containership operators:

- Ensure your stowage system is uniquely identifying pallet wide containers either by a correct ISO Size & Type Code or other indicator that is known in your system.
- Ensure the terminals that your ships call know when you are off-loading pallet wide containers.

### Container owners or lessees:

- Consider remarking your pallet wide containers at their next Periodic CSC Examination or next repair availability to display the newly published mandatory marking for containers over 2438 mm wide. This new mark is required for containers being built today.

Thanks to a member of the ICHCA Technical Panel for providing this information.

### Disclaimer

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