

MEDIA RELEASE

Cargo Integrity Group Calls on Governments to Report Findings of Container Inspections and on IMO to Continue Publishing Them

Tuesday, 17 September 2024

The Cargo Integrity Group (CIG) is calling on national administrations to carry out and report the findings of their container inspection programmes, and for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to continue collating and publishing the results in a publicly accessible form, to support efforts to improve safety in the carriage of goods by sea.

Under resolutions adopted more than 20 years ago member governments of the IMO agreed to conduct routine inspections of freight containers and the cargoes packed in them in a consistent way. The findings are to be submitted annually to IMO for collation and reporting so that a global picture of levels of compliance with international regulations and recommended practices can be obtained, and any appropriate safety improvements identified.

An analysis by partner organisations in the Cargo Integrity Group reveals that less than 5 per cent of 167 national administrations covered by the agreement are regularly submitting the results of their inspections to IMO in publicly available form. Whilst applauding the diligence of those governments making regular submissions, the Cargo Integrity Group is concerned at the overall low numbers of reports as this means that insufficient data is available for IMO or industry to draw reliable conclusions, fundamentally undermining efforts to improve the safety and sustainability of shipments by sea.

The Cargo Integrity Group understands that other states may be conducting inspections of containerized goods entering and leaving their countries but are not submitting the findings to IMO as agreed. Where such reports are not submitted to IMO there is no shared value.

CIG partners believe that common and consistent reporting of inspection findings is essential to help target communication and training programmes aimed at improving awareness of the requirements and recommended safe practices for the transport of goods in containers. These include the SOLAS Convention, the CSC Convention, the IMDG Code, and the CTU Code.

The dangers posed by poorly packed, mis-handled or mis-declared containerized shipments has been demonstrated again recently in a series of fires and explosions aboard container ships. Whilst the precise circumstances of these incidents remain under investigation, the Cargo Integrity Group is concerned that measures already in place to help identify possible weaknesses are not being fully implemented and that opportunities for improving compliance standards are being missed.

CIG partner organisations are also alarmed to learn that the IMO is considering discontinuing the collation and publication of these reports in a form that is easily accessible to Industry. The future of this essential function by the global maritime regulatory agency is being decided in meetings taking place this week.

The Cargo Integrity Group calls on national administrations to fully implement their agreed actions on submitting container inspection findings to IMO to help improve standards in the safe and compliant transport of goods by sea and to follow-up on material deficiencies that may be discovered.

In addition, the Group calls on IMO to continue to publish the reported findings in a form that allows ready understanding of where efforts to improve awareness of, and compliance with, mandatory regulations need to be directed.

References:

1. Guidelines for the Implementation of the Inspection Programmes for Cargo Transport Units. IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ.1649, 20 May 2022.
2. The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (The SOLAS Convention), 1974, entered into force on 25 May 1980.
3. The Convention for Safe Containers, 1972 (The CSC Convention).
4. The International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (The IMDG Code), Amendment 41-22, effective from 1 January 2024.
5. The IMO/ILO/UNECE Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (The CTU Code) is published jointly by the sponsoring organisations and is a compendium of recommended practices to be followed by those packing or loading intermodal containers, road vehicles and railway wagons for international transport.

The Cargo Integrity Group has published a Quick Guide to the CTU Code and a Container Packing Checklist to support compliance with these requirements and recommendations. <https://ichca.com/cargo-integrity-group>

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About the Cargo Integrity Group

The Cargo Integrity Group brings together international freight transport and cargo handling organisations with different roles in the supply chain and a shared dedication to improving safety, security and environmental performance throughout the logistics supply chain. The [Bureau International des Containers](#), the [Container Owners Association](#), [FIATA](#), the [Global Shippers Forum](#), [ICHCA](#), [TT Club](#) and the

[World Shipping Council](#) are cooperating on a range of activities to further the adoption and implementation of crucial safety practices and regulations.

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