



Proposed Measures to Minimize Pest Contamination of Containers and the Potential Impact on the Removal Industry

Joint Statement from FIDI/IAM

The FIDI Global Alliance (FIDI) and the International Association of Movers (IAM) are *closely monitoring* a set of measures proposed by the World Shipping Council ¹ to the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures.

These measures aimed at minimizing globally pest contamination of containers and their cargoes would ultimately be detrimental to the international moving industry by *shifting the responsibility for the condition of an empty container to the 'shipper' who in many cases is the moving company on an international shipment*. These measures would apply to all sea containers packed or empty.

IAM and FIDI are providing this information to their memberships to raise awareness regarding these proposed measures and provide available resources.

Even if the proposed measures are not adopted, national governments are committed to stopping the spread of invasive pests and new requirements are inevitable. While these requirements may not be adopted, movers worldwide should be prepared to take greater steps to prevent the spread of invasive pests.

Proposed new measures and their impacts for the moving industry

Several of the World Shipping Council recommendations would create an unnecessary and unrealistic burden on moving companies. Proposed recommendations include:

- Requirement that each container (packed or empty) be inspected and certified clean prior to loading on a ship;
- Requirement that the shipper certifies that each container is 'clean' through a 'Verified Pest Certificate' – a pre-requisite for the container to be shipped;
- Requirement that the cleanliness of an empty container be checked and verified by the driver of the vehicle sent to collect the container.

Through these proposed measures, *movers will not only face extra costs and logistical challenges but also inherit the liability for any pest contamination as that liability would fall to the user of the container according to the WSC proposal*.

¹ The World Shipping Council (WSC) is an industry trade association representing the international liner shipping industry.

Moving companies identified as the ‘shipper’ of the goods on the Bill of Lading could be held liable for any pest contamination and for the damages arising from that contamination and or the treatment used for decontamination.

Resistance from the Global Shippers Forum² – Counter Proposals

The Global Shippers Forum has presented their initial comments and observations on the practicability and impacts of such measures, together with alternative proposals that are safe, proportionate, economically justified and deliverable in practice.

They do not believe that there is enough evidence presented so far to support the universal application of new mandatory certification or treatment measures to all container movements. Reported incidences of detected pest contamination in sea containers and their cargoes is very small compared to the total number of container movements taking place globally each year.

They also consider that proposing the shipper certify all containers as clean would impose significant new responsibilities on the party representing the container for the shipment. This can be considered as an abdication of the legal and ethical responsibilities of the container owner/operator to supply equipment that is in a fit for purpose and in a condition for use by their customers. *The responsibility to supply clean containers must rest with the owner/operator of the equipment.*

Furthermore, the verification principles espoused by the World Shipping Council should be extended to the supplier of the empty container, and the Global Shippers Forum proposes that the *cleanliness of each empty container should be verified by the supplier of the equipment at the time of its delivery to the user, in the form of a ‘Certificate of Empty Container Cleanliness’.*

They also recommend for the provision of *basic guidance* on the safe and clean packing of sea containers through the *mandatory display of a placard affixed to the interior door of every container by its owner/operator.*

You can find more information on the Global Shippers Forum proposed measures on [FIDI](#) and [IAM](#) websites.

² The Global Shippers Forum (GSF) is a global trade body that speaks up for and advises shippers and cargo owners in the conduct of international trade.

Background

In 2015, the International Plant Protection Convention³ established the Sea Container Task Force whose mandate is to recommend how to reduce the spread of invasive pests in sea containers.

In its final report (scheduled for January 2022) to the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, the Task Force has recently decided to reference the World Shipping Council recommendations and the Global Shippers' Forum response to these recommendations. The final decision on any measures will be made by the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures and these measures may be applicable globally.

A Unified Front

FIDI and IAM are working with the Global Shippers Forum to monitor the measures proposed by the World Shipping Council and are supporting the Global Shippers Forum (GSF)'s recommendations. For more information, contact James Hookham from GSF at JHookham@globalshippersforum.com. FIDI and IAM are grateful for the leadership shown by James and GSF in helping to educate and bring awareness on this critical issue.

Available Resources

The following resources on avoiding pest contamination in ocean freight containers are available in several languages on <https://globalshippersforum.com/the-cargo-integrity-group/>

- [The Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units](#)
- [Container Packing Checklist](#) – a checklist for the safe packing and avoidance of pest contamination of freight containers.

About FIDI

FIDI is the largest global alliance of quality-certified international moving and relocation companies. FIDI currently has over 600 Affiliates in more than 100 countries, delivering comprehensive global mobility services to families, individuals and companies. Every FIDI Affiliate complies with the rigorous FIDI-FAIM quality standard, which is regarded as the leading professional industry standard worldwide. This assures final customers that only the highest-quality moving companies are part of the network. For more information, please visit www.fidi.org

About IAM

The International Association of Movers (IAM) is the moving and forwarding industry's largest global trade association. With more than 2,000 members, it comprises companies that provide moving, forwarding, shipping, logistics, and related services in more than 170 countries. Since 1962, IAM has been promoting the growth and success of its members by offering programs, resources, membership protections, and unparalleled networking opportunities to enhance their businesses and their brands. For more information, please visit www.iamovers.org

³ The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is the global agreement on measures to reduce risk of invasive species transfer between countries. It is an UN-sponsored convention and the secretariat that supports it is part of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) based in Rome. Its 181 signatory countries are bound to implement its decisions and resolutions.