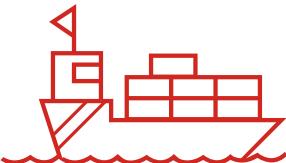




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# Container Cargo – Planning, teamwork makes the dream work!

Guidance on the importance of teamwork  
when planning a container ship stow

## 1. Central Planner

In most cases the initial cargo plan is prepared centrally where all the shipping instructions are sent. This central planner will receive the load list data and proceed to plan the vessel for the specific service. The central planner will consider many things including:

- Vessel requirements, e.g. the Cargo Securing Manual (CSM)
- Regulatory requirements, e.g. the IMDG Code
- Reefer cargo requirements
- The vessel's stability condition on departure
- Lashing forces and stack weights

The initial or pre-stow plan should then be sent to the vessel prior to its arrival in port and to the terminal planner.

## 2. The vessel's crew

Once the vessel receives the pre-stow plan, the master or appointed officer should thoroughly check the plan, considering factors that include:

- Is the departure tank condition calculated by the central planner realistic and possible?
- Do the stacks have any heavy over light boxes?
- Are the stack and tier weights in accordance with the CSM for the expected departure GM?
- Are the lashing acceleration force limits exceeded for the expected departure GM and weight distribution?
- Is the hi-cube container distribution in accordance with the CSM?
- Is the bridge line of sight within limits?
- Are hazardous cargo containers stowed and segregated in accordance with the IMDG Code and the vessel's document of compliance?
- Does the proposed stowage of reefers allow them to be accessible throughout the voyage?
- Are there any other vessel-specific requirements that must be met?
- Can the stability condition after loading be maintained for the entire voyage?

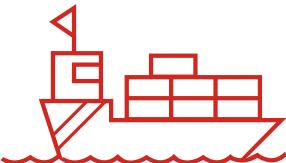
When the master has checked the pre-stow plan, they should communicate with the central and terminal planners to ensure that the necessary changes are made before the vessel's arrival in port.

## 3. Terminal Planner

The terminal planner uses the plan to organise their internal logistics. They usually take the submitted plan to the vessel on its arrival and liaise with the master to make any required changes, which they should then feedback to the central planner.



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### Communication is key

These three parties must communicate to ensure the plan is safe and executed correctly.

The central planner will potentially be planning several vessels at the same time and therefore errors could occur.

The vessel's crew and the terminal planner must play their part to ensure that any issues are identified and resolved. If one member of the team fails to fully check the plan, then problems will occur!

### What can go wrong?

There are many cases where containers have been lost over the vessel's side. During investigations, these plans are inspected and it is commonly found that they contained errors and were not in accordance with requirements.

The UK MAIB recently issued their report on the loss of over 42 containers overboard on the MV Ever Smart. Upon inspection of the plan on the vessel's loading computer, it was found that the stack weights for the vessel's GM were exceeded. This defective condition was evident on the final stow plan. Why was this not identified by any of the three parties?

Line	16	14	12	10	08	06	04	02	00	01	03	05	07	09	11	13	15
Stack Weight	492	497	491	494	496	498	500	502	504	506	509	512	515	518	521	524	511
Stack Posn	440	501	517	518	482	423	459	514	487	575	455	503	468	404	526	512	457
Bm Tension	400	417	363	361	239	424	252	816	365	363	329	328	342	265	283	342	44
Top Tension	315	455	476	672	641	665	830	845	653	679	623	664	643	835	655	665	314
Port Comp	293	383	360	384	376	382	380	365	317	367	362	386	375	383	380	361	381
Bottom Comp	688	618	603	593	616	632	504	492	518	462	531	506	514	518	513	517	589
Bottom Posn	688	618	603	593	616	632	504	492	518	462	531	506	514	518	513	517	589

Ever Smart bay 70 load plan taken from the MAIB report into the incident.

### Check, Check and Check!

If all three parties carefully check all the stow plans, communicate properly and effectively fulfil their role in the team, such losses can be avoided.

Errors can be made by anyone, but if you work and communicate as a team such errors can be easily spotted and corrected early.

### Useful links

MAIB Ever Smart accident report:  
[www.gov.uk/maib-reports/loss-of-cargo-containers-overboard-from-container-ship-ever-smart](http://www.gov.uk/maib-reports/loss-of-cargo-containers-overboard-from-container-ship-ever-smart)

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