



Gard launches new Guidance on Freight Containers

In a joint venture with marine surveyor Jeroen de Haas, this new Gard book aims to review and give a unique understanding of the handling and risks involved in shipping containerised cargo.

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Background

About 90 per cent of international trade is moved by ocean-going ships and the majority of consumer and semi-finished goods are shipped in containers at sea. What better way to mark 60 years of container use than with this comprehensive guide. It is hoped that this new Guidance will become the go-to reference book for information and knowledge about the freight container and its proper handling, stowage and securing on board.

Who should read the Gard Guidance on Freight Containers?

The book is of general interest to any person involved in the freight container trade as well as surveyors, lawyers, insurers, professional/technical organisations and students. It is primarily intended for seafarers handling containers as part of their day to day duties. The aim of the Guidance is to give them context and practical assistance to help them both better understand and manage the risks involved in container operations onboard and ashore.

What the book covers

The book is about intermodal transport and container handling in its widest form - operations, geographical differences and underlying technology. It is impossible to provide answers to the many complex problems which can arise in so many varied container operation activities. However, we hope the Guidance addresses the most common and frequent risks of the trade.

The book begins with an overview of the historical development of container shipping and evolution of container ships through eight generations. The role of the container in goods transportation spans six decades while ship design has evolved from converted break bulkers and tankers carrying 58 trailer/container units to ultra large container ships carrying almost 20,000 twenty foot equivalent units.

The real importance of the container is its ability to be carried by different modes of transport without having to handle the cargo at any intermediate stage. The container's journey "from A to B" can be varied and long, therefore, a substantial chapter is devoted to transportation networks and the various means of moving containers, which in addition to sea carriage, include barge, rail and road transport.

Container terminals are pivotal points in container transportation. Chapter four of the book gives an insight into the assembly, dispatch and transfer processes at a modern container terminal as well as the complexities of storage, shipping and stowage planning.

The next chapter looks at container operations and risks from an onboard perspective, where the crew's main role involves getting the ship safely - and on schedule - from port to port. It also includes a review of possible causes of typical container ship-related casualties.

The Guidance would be incomplete without a summary of the regulations, standards and requirements covering the design, maintenance and transportation of containers, which is covered in chapter six.

The book concludes with a section on container insurance explaining the cover, limits, exclusions etc. Gard has offered a [Container%20Insurance%202013.pdf](#) for several years covering damage to and loss of containers, as well as contributions to general average.

The Guidance is rich with illustrations, photographs and anecdotes throughout. Copies of the book can be ordered from Gard and it will soon be available online.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the book's lead author, Jeroen de Haas, who has worked on this publication together with the team from Gard and other experts. De Haas says of the publication, "The biggest compliment I can receive is that readers find the book informative, clear and comprehensible. With the tremendous growth in container ship size and corresponding changes in container terminal operations and other parts of the logistical chain over the past two decades knowledge, prevention and risk management are increasingly important in this trade".

Jeroen de Haas, Managing Director of [BMT Surveys](#) (Rotterdam) BV has been in the international surveying business for more than 25 years with specialist knowledge in the safe and secure transport of containers. In addition he is dually qualified as a deck officer and marine engineer and has a degree in Maritime Sciences from Antwerp University.

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