

Box Clever: Tackling the basic working practises on container ships that when ignored cause big problems!

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 feed back to the central planner.



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Teamwork makes the dream work! (cont).

COMMUNICATION IS THE 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 its 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 wasn't this identified by any of the three parties?

Unit	16	14	12	10	08	06	04	02	00	01	03	05	07	09	11	13	15	Unit	
Stack Weight	43.2	43.7	49.7	43.4	46.9	49.6	50.8	48.2	50.8	46.9	48.2	48.6	48.2	48.8	48.3	41.1		Stack Weight	
Reck Force	44.0	50.1	51.7	51.8	48.2	52.3	48.9	51.1	49.7	52.5	48.5	50.3	48.6	48.4	52.5	43.7		Reck Force	
Btm. Tension	50.0	41.7	36.8	36.1	29.6	42.4	26.2	31.5	35.0	36.0	32.9	34.2	29.5	28.3	34.2	44.7		Btm. Tension	
Top Tension	31.5	65.6	67.6	67.2	64.1	66.5	63.0	64.5	65.3	67.9	62.8	66.4	64.3	63.5	66.5	66.5	31.4		Top Tension
Post Comp	69.7	61.8	63.8	63.7	60.6	62.3	60.6	63.0	61.8	64.4	59.7	62.6	60.8	60.2	62.3	62.8			Post Comp
Bottom Comp	53.8	33.8	33.0	33.8	37.6	38.2	38.0	36.5	37.7	39.7	36.7	38.6	37.5	37.5	38.3	38.0	23.1		Bottom Comp
End Tension	63.8	61.8	63.8	63.8	61.6	63.2	60.4	63.2	61.8	64.2	63.1	60.8	61.4	61.8	61.3	61.7	58.9		End Tension

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, then maybe 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

North's container stowage quick facts: www.nepia.com/publications/container-stowage-poster

North's container stowage LP briefing: www.nepia.com/publications/carriage-of-containers-stowage-and-securing-briefing

MAIB Ever Smart accident report:

www.gov.uk/maib-reports/loss-of-cargo-containers-overboard-from-container-ship-ever-smart

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