REGIONAL STANDARD

FOR PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

***DRAFT***

***The SAFE movement of***

***shipping containers***

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **Scope**

This regional standard for phytosanitary measures (RSPM) provides a framework for minimizing contamination and contaminating pests associated with shipping containers, including those that are transhipped. This RSPM provides guidance on categories of contamination and contaminating pests and examples, options for measures and, options for documentation that verifies that measures have been applied to shipping containers.

## **References**

The standard refers to ISPMs. ISPMs are available on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) at www.ippc.int/core-activities/standards-setting/ispms.

BIC (Bureau International des Containers), COA (Container Owners Association), IICL (Institute of International Container Lessors), and WSC (World Shipping Council). 2024. *Joint Industry Guidelines for Cleaning of Containers: Prevention of Pest Contamination of Containers*. <https://www.bic-code.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Joint-Industry-Guidelines-for-Cleaning-of-Containers-March-2024.pdf>.

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IPPC. 2018. *Guidance on sea container cleanliness*. Rome, IPPC Secretariat, FAO. 2pp. <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/I8960EN>

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IPPC Secretariat. 2020b. *Sea container supply chains and cleanliness – An IPPC best practice guide on measures to minimize pest contamination*. Rome, IPPC Secretariat, FAO. 6 pp. <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca7963en>

IPPC Secretariat. 2020c. *Sea containers surveys – Guidelines for national plant protection organizations (NPPOs)*. vi + 6 pp. <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca7963en>

IPPC CPM Recommendation R-06. 2017. *Sea containers*. Rome, IPPC Secretariat, FAO. Adopted 2015. Revision published in CPM-18 - 2024.

# **Definitions**

Definitions of phytosanitary terms used in this standard can be found in ISPM 5 (*Glossary of phytosanitary terms*).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Inbound shipping container**  | An international shipping container that is imported, or transhipped via road, rail or sea. |
| **Logistics chain** | The coordinated processes, systems and entities involved in the movement of shipping containers and their cargoes. |
| **Non-compliance** | Failure to comply with the phytosanitary import requirements. |
| **Non-conformity** (as it relates to **NPPO-recognized entities**) | When the recognized entity does not meet the requirements specified by the NPPO.  |
| **Outbound shipping container** | An international shipping container that is exported, or transhipped via road, rail, or sea. |
| **Non-regulatory components** | Any part of the framework that provides guidance, best practices, tools, or recommendations, but are not enforceable by the NPPO. |
| **NPPO-recognized entity** | An entity that has an official status (e.g. authorization, accreditation, approval) from an NPPO to perform a function related to the safe movement of shipping containers. |
| **Regulatory components** | Any element of the framework that is enforceable by an NPPO to ensure compliance. |
| **Shipping container** | All types of containerized cargo transport units (CTUs) that can be transported by road, rail, or sea. Types of CTUs include dry, flat rack, open top, tunnel, insulated or thermal, refrigerated, ISO tank, half height, and other specialized containers. |
| **Verification of compliance** (as it relates to **shipping container**s) | The process of examining and confirming that shipping container samples meet cleanliness and regulatory requirements.  |

# **Outline of requirements**

This RSPM outlines the requirements for minimizing contamination and contaminating pests associated with shipping containers. It describes the roles and responsibilities of NPPOs involved in the management of contaminating pests and verification actions that confirm that pests are minimized.

This RSPM also provides guidance on assessing pest risks and examples of measures that may apply to the movement of all types of shipping containers to prevent the spread of contamination and contaminating pests.

# **BACKGROUND**

The international movement of contaminated shipping containers is a recognized pathway for the introduction of pests of concern to plants. These pests can also pose risks to animal, environmental and human health. Shipping containers can become contaminated at different points in the logistics chain and actions may be taken to minimize this contamination to allow for shipping containers to be moved safely in trade.

Shipping container logistics are complex and easily disrupted by delays. Even minor delays can have costly impacts on international logistics chains that affect consumers. It is essential to carefully balance managing the contamination risk with logistics chain efficiency and national plant protection organizations (NPPO) should only implement technically justified and risk-based measures.

# **PRINCIPLES OF RELEVANCE TO THIS RSPM**

The basic principles for the protection of plants and the objectives of the international plant protection convention (IPPC) set out in ISPM 1 (*Phytosanitary principles for the protection of plants and the application of phytosanitary measures in international trade*) apply to the movement of shipping containers. The key principles of necessity, minimal impact, and equivalence of phytosanitary measures should be taken into account when setting requirements.

# **REQUIREMENTS**

National plant protection organizations should establish a framework for minimizing contamination and contaminating pests associated with shipping containers that may include regulatory and non-regulatory components. The regulatory components should, as needed, provide requirements that:

* ensure containers are clean and compliant with importing country requirements at export; and
* verify compliance and manage contamination on-arrival in the importing country.

Non-regulatory components should include activities that support the regulatory components of the framework and may be undertaken by non-NPPO entities.

Adhering to requirements and sharing responsibility promotes an integrated and resilient system to minimize the spread of pests.

1 Regulatory components

National plant protection organizations should, and if not feasible, work towards having regulatory components in place to control the movement of regulated articles, including shipping containers, and activities associated with them. The regulatory components are those that are enforceable by an NPPO to ensure compliance. The regulatory components may include, as needed, having the legal authority to:

*Importing NPPOs*

* establish and publish import requirements based on pest risk analysis or other comparable evaluation of scientific information that apply to regulated articles including shipping containers;
* collect, record and store data on contamination and contaminating pest risks and report significant non-compliances to exporting NPPOs;
* verify compliance with importing requirements;
* take actions to manage non-compliances;
* recognize entities to perform specific actions in relation to the import of shipping containers (e.g. site hygiene, cleaning, visual examination and treatments);
* set minimum requirements for infrastructure that supports risk management activities at ports, and sites handling containers;
* conduct surveillance activities around ports and facilities receiving, storing and transporting shipping containers.

*Exporting NPPOs*

* develop and maintain a system for complying with the requirements of the importing NPPO for shipping containers;
* recognize entities to perform specific actions in relation to the export of shipping containers (e.g. site hygiene, cleaning, treatments, visual examination and certification);
* have a mechanism (e.g. NPPO-recognition) to verify compliance with importing country requirements;
* manage non-conformance, where appropriate;
* require records to be kept of activities relating to the safe movement of shipping containers (e.g. site hygiene, cleaning, treatments, visual examination and certification);
* have a collaborative programme of regular review and updating of practices and standards based on new research, technological advancements and feedback from entities involved with shipping container logistics.

#### **1.1 Import requirements for shipping containers**

Importing NPPOs should assess the contamination and contaminating pest risks of shipping containers to ensure that the measures applied to them are proportionate to the risk. Assessments may be carried out jointly or shared between NPPOs.

ISPM 11 (*Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests*) provides guidance for assessing risks associated with shipping containers (referred to as ‘*conveyances*’). Surveillance and historical data may be used to identify **high-risk routes or points of origin and** different contamination and contaminating pests.

Appendix 1 provides guidance on the factors that influence contamination of shipping containers and the categories of contamination of shipping containers.

#### **1.2 Verifying compliance**

National plant protection organizations should develop procedures for verifying that shipping containers are clean and free from contamination prior to export if required by the importing country, and on-arrival in the importing country. IPPC Secretariat (2020c) provides guidance on how to select samples, inspect and record contamination details when undertaking container surveys.

#### **1.3 Managing non-compliance**

Shipping containers that do not meet import requirements are non-compliant. Non-compliances maybe related to documentation or the detection of contamination or regulated pests on a shipping container. The corrective actions taken should be proportionate with the risk posed.

Significant occurrences of non-compliance should be reported to the NPPO of the exporting country in accordance with ISPM 13 (*Guidelines for the notification of non-compliance and emergency action*).

#### **1.4 Recognizing entities**

National plant protection organizations-recognized entities may carry out specific actions in the country of export or the country of import to meet NPPO requirements.

The NPPOs may consider the information in the IMO *et al.* *Code of practice for packing of cargo transport units* (2014) and BIC *et al*. *Joint Industry Guidelines for Cleaning of Containers: Prevention of Pest Contamination of Containers* (2024) to be performed by entities. These activities may include cleaning of shipping containers, site hygiene and treatments (refer to Appendix 2).

#### **1.5 Auditing**

National plant protection organizations should, where appropriate and in accordance with ISPM 47 (*Audit in the phytosanitary context*), establish an audit programme for auditing NPPO-recognized entities involved with the inbound and outbound movement of shipping containers within their territory. The programme should include:

* the frequency of audits which considers the role of the entity in moving shipping containers and the history of compliance of the entity; and
* the types of non-conformance and corresponding consequences and corrective actions.

#### **1.6 Measures to minimize contamination and contaminating pests**

National plant protection organizations should establish appropriate measures to minimize contamination and contaminating pests associated with shipping containers.

Measures for minimizing specific and general contamination and contaminating pests may include cleaning and treatment. Examples of these measures are provided in Appendix 3.

Where contamination and contaminating pests are found and collected on inbound containers, then their secure disposal may include one or more of the following in accordance with local regulations and guidelines:

* physical containment, such as bagging;
* incineration;
* deep burial.

#### **1.7 Minimum infrastructure requirements**

National plant protection organizations should ensure that containers are stored at facilities or sites handling containers (e.g. sea ports, depots, packing and unpacking sites as appropriate) with a hard stand area (e.g. concrete, compacted gravel). Facilities or sites handling containers may also include a dedicated visual examination area (e.g. stand or platform) and wash bay. In addition, the following site hygiene practices should be in place:

* a pest control programme, including habitat management;
* segregation of clean and unclean containers, where feasible; and
* a waste management system to safely dispose of contamination and contaminating pests, where applicable.

#### **1.8 Surveillance**

National plant protection organizations or NPPO-recognized entities should monitor for pests in and around appropriate facilities or sites where shipping containers are handled and stored. Surveillance may be used to:

* gather data on pests, pest movements, and infestation patterns;
* monitor compliance with minimum infrastructure requirements to adjust strategies and measures when needed; and
* guide risk-based decisions on which shipping containers should be visually examined and what measures should be taken to manage contamination and contaminating pests.

#### **1.9 Documentation**

Based on importing requirements and agreement with the importing NPPO, exporting NPPOs, or NPPO-recognized entities, should issue appropriate documentation confirming that outbound shipping containers are clean and free from contamination and contaminating pests.

Appendix 4 provides options for documentation that may be provided to confirm the cleanliness of shipping containers.

#### **1.10 Record keeping**

The following records should be kept:

* pest surveillance (e.g. when, by whom, method and the results);
* a list of NPPO-recognized entities and the activities they are recognized to perform, if applicable;
* documents issued by the NPPO or NPPO recognized entities, if applicable;
* audit outcomes of NPPO-recognized entities;
* non-compliances, non-conformities and corrective actions.

#### **1.11 Regular review**

National plant protection organizations should regularly review and assess the effectiveness of the components of the framework. This involves working collaboratively with all relevant entities and NPPOs to review:

* compliance with regulatory requirements;
* corrective actions for non-compliance and non-conformity;
* feedback from inspectors and stakeholders on the effectiveness of processes;
* reviewing best practices and technological advancements that can be used to improve risk management of shipping containers.

2 Non-regulatory components

National plant protection organizations should consider including non-regulatory components into a framework for minimizing contamination and contaminating pests associated with shipping containers. Non-regulatory components are any guidance, best practices, tools, or recommendations but are not enforceable by the NPPO. The non-regulatory components may include, as needed:

* IPPC and industry best practices guidelines;
* an awareness and communication programme;
* a programme to educate and train personnel on shipping container cleanliness;
* collaborative arrangements with entities involved with shipping container logistics for monitoring and managing the pest risks associated with shipping containers (e.g. shipping companies, port authorities, customs, authorities having responsibility for managing animal and human health);

#### **2.1 Best practice guidelines**

National plant protection organizations may develop in conjunction with entities involved in shipping container logistics, procedures relevant to site hygiene, pest monitoring and control, waste management, and the cleaning, visual examination and treatment of shipping containers. NPPOs may also use existing guidelines to determine interchange or critical control points and the measures that can be applied (e.g. IMO *et al.* 2014, BIC *et al.* 2024).

#### **2.2 Awareness and communication programme**

National plant protection organizations may develop in conjunction with entities involved in shipping container logistics, an ongoing awareness programme which may include information on:

* contamination and contaminating pest risks associated with shipping containers;
* detecting pest infestation on shipping containers;
* practices that prevent, reduce and manage contamination and contaminating pest risk on shipping containers;
* pest and non-compliance reporting expectations of entities to the NPPO (i.e. what, when and how to report).

Alternatively, NPPOs may use existing IPPC awareness and communication materials (e.g. IPPC 2018, IPPC Secretariat 2020a,b).

#### **2.3 Education and training**

National plant protection organizations, in conjunction with entities involved in shipping container logistics, may develop and deliver training programmes for inspectors, auditors, and relevant entities to ensure they understand:

* the requirements for the safe movement of shipping containers;
* the contamination and contaminating pests associated with shipping containers;
* expectations for identifying and reporting contamination and contaminating pest interceptions;
* best practices for cleaning and treating containers; and
* activities that support the effective implementation of measures.

# **APPENDIX 1: Contamination associated with shipping containers**

A factsheet developed by the IPPC provides useful information and guidance on reducing the spread of invasive species by sea containers (IPPC 2018).

1. **Factors influencing contamination of shipping containers**

The movement of shipping containers is complex and can involve multiple destinations and operators. This complexity can make it difficult to conduct standard risk analyses. However, analyses can focus on factors that influence the type and amount of contamination and contaminating pest risk on shipping containers to determine appropriate measures. These factors may also be relevant for developing verification plans.

**Table 1.** Factors affecting the level of contamination and contaminating pests associated with shipping containers

| **Factor**  | **Examples of contamination and contaminating pest risk** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Origin
 | * Containers from regions with high pest prevalence or specific environmental conditions can increase the risk of contamination.
 |
| 1. Storage conditions
 | * Containers stored in areas with high pest activity, such as near forests, agricultural fields, or waste disposal sites, increase the risk of containers becoming infested.
* Poorly maintained storage facilities can contribute to increases in pest populations.
* Containers left uncovered or open, exposed to the environmental conditions, or stored on permeable surfaces may accumulate organic debris, such as soil or plant material, which can carry or attract pests.
 |
| 1. Transport route (e.g. across land or sea, with or without transshipment stops)
 | * Containers passing through regions with high humidity or warm climates can cause condensation, attract pests and create favourable conditions for their survival.
* Longer journeys with multiple transit stops provide opportunities for pests to infest containers.
* Containers transported across land through rural, forested or agricultural areas (e.g. on unpaved roads) can be exposed to contamination by soil or plant material.
* Containers transported by sea can be exposed to contamination and cross-contamination with other cargoes, insects, and animal droppings.
 |
| 1. Structural type (e.g. general purpose, flat rack, open top, tunnel, insulated or thermal, refrigerated, ISO tank, half height,)
 | **General purpose container**:* Poor maintenance, such as cracks or gaps, can allow pests to enter and contaminate. If containers have wooden floors, then these can be infested by wood-infesting pests.

**Flat rack and open-top containers**:* Containers with open sides, tops, and ends are susceptible to contamination and pest infestation, especially during storage or transit in pest-prone areas.
* These containers have removable tarpaulin covers instead of solid roofs. If covers do not seal correctly, the risk of pests or debris entering, particularly in outdoor storage is increased.

**Tunnel containers**:* Containers with doors on both ends provide additional access points, which, if not properly sealed, can increase pest risks.

**Insulated or thermal containers**:* These containers are less likely to attract pests internally, but external contamination can occur if the insulation or seals are damaged.

**Refrigerated containers (reefers)**:* Condensation from cooling systems can attract pests if not managed properly. The machinery compartments can provide pest habitats (e.g. ants and nesting birds).

**ISO tank containers (tanktainers)**:* These containers are less prone to internal pest infestation than other container types, but external surfaces can become contaminated.

**Half-height containers**:* The open design of half-height containers can make them vulnerable to contamination, especially if stored in pest-prone areas.
 |
| 1. Type of cargo and loading conditions
 | * products like timber, waste materials, agricultural goods, or soil are prone to pest contamination because these materials can attract pests.
* Loading of cargo into containers near pest-prone areas, over a long period of time, or under certain types of lighting can increase pest risk.
 |
| 1. Container condition
 | * Structural degradation, damage and accumulation of organic debris associated with poorly maintained containers can increase pest risk.
 |

1. **Categories of contamination and contaminating pests associated with shipping containers**

The following are categories and examples of contamination associated with shipping containers (Table 2). Some contaminants can fall into more than one contamination and contaminating pest category.

Because some contaminants found on shipping containers are not plant pests, NPPOs may need to work with other relevant government and non-government agencies to manage the risk.

**Table 2:** Categories and examples of contamination and contaminating pests associated with shipping containers

| **Contamination and contaminating pest categories** | **Examples of contaminants intercepted on shipping containers** |
| --- | --- |
| **Environmental pest:** Any organism that can negatively impact natural ecosystems or biodiversity and cause ecological harm. | AmphibiansInvasive ant speciesSnails Snakes Weeds  |
| **Human health pest:** Any organism that can pose a threat to human health and well-being by transmitting diseases, causing allergic reactions, or inflicting physical harm. | CockroachesMosquitoesRodentsSpidersTicks |
| **Plant pest:** Any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products (ISPM 5). | Beetles FliesPlant pathogens Stink bugsSnails Vectors of pathogens (e.g. soil) |
| **Animal health pest:** Any organism that poses a threat to animal health and well-being by transmitting diseases, causing physical harm, or negatively impacting productivity. | FleasFliesMitesMosquitoesTicksVectors of pathogens |
| **Stored product pest:** Any organism that can infest, damage and cause economic loss to stored goods (such as grains, seeds, processed foods, and other commodities) by contamination and reducing quality. | BeetlesMothsPathogens RodentsWeeds |
| **Structural pest:** Any organism that infests and damages buildings and other structures, compromising their integrity and safety through feeding on, or nesting within, them. | BeetlesCarpenter antsFungiTermitesWood boring beetles |
| **Nuisance pest:** Any organism that can affect quality of life by invading homes, workplaces, and recreational areas, causing discomfort, annoyance, and damage. | AntsBeetlesFliesHymenoptera (bees, hornets and wasps)RodentsSpidersStink bugs |
| **Vector:** Any organism or [non-living] regulated article that facilitates the transmission or spread of pests regardless of whether it directly causes damage itself. | Animal droppingsFood waste/recyclingInsects and insect egg massesNematodesSnailsSoilWaste materials (e.g. solid waste)Water  |
| **Cargo spill:** Any accidental release of organic matter or other substance from a shipping container during transport or handlingthat may harbour or vector pests. | Animal productsPlant products |

# **APPENDIX 2: Activities that entities may be recognized to perform with respect to shipping containers**

The activities that NPPO-recognized entities involved in shipping container logistics may undertake are in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Activities that NPPO-recognized entities can undertake

| **Entities in the logistics chain** | **NPPO-recognized activities** |
| --- | --- |
| Exporters/packers | Pest monitoring and controlContainer cleaningContainer examination |
| Shipping companies | Pest monitoring and control Container cleaningVessel surveillance |
| Port authorities | Pest monitoring and control |
| Importers | Container cleaning (post-devanning) |
| Container depot operators | Pest monitoring and controlVisual risk-based examination of containers Container cleaningIssuing compliance certificates  |
| Transporters (land, sea) | Pest monitoring and control (container and yards) |
| Rail yard operators | Pest monitoring and control  |
| Transhipment terminal operators | Visual risk-based examination |
| Storage facility operators | Visual risk-based examinationContainer risk management Issuing compliance certificates |
| Devanning facility operators | Visual risk-based examinationContainer cleaningIssuing compliance certificates |
| Treatment facility operators | Shipping container treatments Issuing treatment certificates |

# **APPENDIX 3: Examples of measures to minimize contamination and contaminating pests on shipping containers**

The examples for measures included in this appendix may be effective at minimizing contamination and contaminating pest risks, when used alone or when integrated with other options. NPPOs are encouraged to consider the level of risk to be managed and apply appropriate measures.

1. **Industry-led and NPPO-led visual examination of shipping containers**

Visual examination of shipping containers does not directly manage pest risk but may be used to:

* determine the need for further measures to remove contamination and contaminating pests;
* verify that measures have been effective in minimizing contamination and contaminating pests; and
* support assurances of container cleanliness provided to importing NPPOs.

IPPC (2020c) provides guidelines on procedures for inspecting shipping containers. If visual examination determines that further measures are needed, then options for these measures are provided below along with guidance for the type of contamination and contaminating pests that the measure minimizes.

1. **Cleaning**

Cleaning involves removing contamination and contaminating pests.

Loose debris, soil, gravel, plant material and other contaminants can be removed by:

* brushing, sweeping or vacuuming interior and exterior walls of containers; or
* high-pressure washing to dislodge contamination and contaminating pests from areas that are difficult to inspect.

Washing water may include detergents or disinfecting solutions. Local environmental regulations need to be considered when managing wastewater.

1. **Treatments**

Options for treatments may include:

* pesticide sprays;
* chemical fumigants and fogs (e.g. ethyl formate + CO2, formaldehyde, methyl bromide, sulphuryl fluoride, peracetic acid);
* disinfectants (e.g. sodium hypochlorite, didecyl dimethylammonium chloride); and
* temperature treatments.

When selecting a suitable option, consider:

* the container type (e.g. food grade or non-food grade containers);
* their cargoes or intended cargoes (e.g. sensitive cargoes to prevent damage); and
* the requirements or methodologies of the importing NPPO.

# **APPENDIX 4: Examples for documentation to confirm compliance of shipping containers**

Documentation may be issued by exporting NPPOs and NPPO-recognized entities to accompany outbound shipping containers to confirm compliance by indicating that the shipping container is clean and free from contamination and contaminating pests. Examples include:

1. A certificate or other documented evidence stating that:
	* a container has been visually examined and is clean;
	* a container complies with importing requirements;
	* a treatment has been applied effectively;
	* the container has been cleaned (e.g. cleaning records).
2. If applicable, for a container transporting a cargo of plant or plant products, then a phytosanitary certificate may be used to certify that both the container (as the regulated article carrying the plant or plant products) and its cargo are free from regulated pests specified by the importing country. NPPOs mayprovide appropriate additional information attesting to container cleanliness.