

Approved Specifications: Visual Examination of Sea Containers (2026-003)

1. Title

E-learning course on visual examination of sea containers

2. Type of IPPC Guide or training material

New implementation resource (e-learning course)

3. Convention articles, ISPMs and CPM recommendations to be addressed by the proposed IPPC Guide or training material

IPPC Guidelines on Sea Container Surveys for NPPOs (2020)

Commission on Phytosanitary Measures Recommendation No. 6 *Minimizing the pest risk associated with the sea-container pathway* (2024)

4. Scope

Stakeholders: any industry or logistics operator handling or transporting sea containers

National plant protection organization (NPPO) inspectors

Customs officials and other border agencies

Bodies authorised by NPPOs to perform visual examination of sea containers

5. Purpose

The CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers is developing a framework of regulatory and non-regulatory options, and also identified potential solutions and measures to reduce the risk associated with the sea-container pathway. A crucial component of this framework is the introduction of custodial responsibility, which makes every person or company in the supply chain, who is in possession of the container, responsible for making sure that the container and its cargo are “clean” before they are passed to the next person or company.

With over 250 million international movements of sea containers per year, all parties involved in the supply chain should fulfil their custodial responsibility by ensuring that containers and their cargoes are free from visible pest contamination. To make sure that all persons involved can have the knowledge necessary to execute their custodial responsibility, a freely available e-learning course would be extremely valuable. It would make sure that anyone in the world with internet access could follow the course and get a badge to prove they had successfully completed it.

6. Content for the IPPC Guide or training material

The e-learning course would consist of one module and follow the IPPC Guidelines on Sea Container Surveys for NPPOs, with:

- a short introduction describing the importance of clean containers and their cargoes;
- an explanation of the necessity of working within the local rules on health and safety;
- the steps to follow when visually examining a sea container;
- where to look in and on a container;
- typical signs of contamination; and

- what to do if contamination is found.

7. References and supporting materials (*optional*)

International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). 2014. *IMO/ILO/UNECE Code of practice for packing of cargo transport units (CTU Code)*. London, IMO.

https://unece.org/DAM/trans/doc/2014/wp24/CTU_Code_January_2014.pdf

IPPC Secretariat. 2020. *Sea containers surveys – Guidelines for national plant protection organisations (NPPOs)*. Rome, IPPC Secretariat, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca7740en>

IPPC Secretariat. 2024. *Minimizing the pest risk associated with the sea-container pathway. Commission on Phytosanitary Measures Recommendation No. 6*. Rome, IPPC Secretariat, FAO. <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/84233/>

IPPC Secretariat. 2024. *Prevention of pest contamination of containers: Revised joint industry guidelines for cleaning of containers (World Shipping Council)*. CPM 2024/INF/16. Rome, IPPC Secretariat, FAO. <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/93227/>

Pictures (to be provided by the CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers)

8. Financial and in-kind contributions (*optional*)

Technical information and pictures can be supplied by the CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers.

The focus group will also be available to review/pre-test the e-learning course.

9. Selection criteria for working group experts (*optional*)

Not applicable