

# Import Health Standard

for

## Sea Containers

Short Name: SEACO

MAF Biosecurity New Zealand  
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry  
P.O Box 2526  
Wellington 6011  
New Zealand

## Approval

MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (MAFBNZ), in accordance with section 22 of the Biosecurity Act 1993, approves this standard – *SEACO: Import Health Standard for Sea Containers* as the import health standard for sea containers from all countries.

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**Clive Gower-Collins**

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**Date**

Deputy Chief Technical Officer  
Operations and Facilities Group  
Border Standards Directorate  
MAF Biosecurity New Zealand

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## Foreword

MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (MAFBNZ), a division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), is the lead agency in New Zealand's biosecurity system. It is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Biosecurity Act 1993, including preventing the importation of unwanted pests and diseases, and for controlling, managing or eradicating them should they arrive.

This '*Import Health Standard for Sea Containers*' is a MAF standard and cancels and replaces the following MAF standard:

- *BMG-STD-SEACO: Import Health Standard for Sea Containers from All Countries (September 2003)*

## Review and Amendment

This standard is subject to review and amendment at any time to ensure that it continues to meet biosecurity objectives. Reviews and amendments will be notified to stakeholders and will be published on the MAFBNZ website. All stakeholders are responsible for ensuring that the most recent version of this standard is used.

## Contacts

For all matters relating to the interpretation, review and amendment of this standard, please contact:

Operations and Facilities Group  
Sea Container Standard  
MAF Biosecurity New Zealand  
P O Box 2526  
Wellington 6011  
NEW ZEALAND

Fax: 64 4 894 0228  
Email: [standards@maf.govt.nz](mailto:standards@maf.govt.nz)

For all matters relating to the operation of this standard, including inspections, audits and treatments, please contact your local MAFBNZ office.

## General Information

### 1 Introduction

This import health standard outlines the minimum requirements that must be met when importing sea containers and associated packaging material into New Zealand. The desired outcome of this standard is to effectively and efficiently manage biosecurity pests and contamination associated with imported sea containers and packaging to obtain biosecurity clearance.

A biosecurity clearance, pursuant to section 26 of the Biosecurity Act 1993, will be issued when a container meets the requirements of this import health standard.

*The associated reference document is designed to clarify and provide extra information about how the requirements of this standard could be met.*

Cargo carried inside a container must meet other relevant MAFBNZ import health standards to gain biosecurity clearance.

### 2 Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this standard and the associated reference document, definitions are as per the Biosecurity Act 1993. An expanded list of definitions is also included in the reference document.

### 3 Equivalence

Any person or organisation may propose a system where the management of biosecurity pests and contamination associated with sea containers and packaging material achieves the same or better performance as the outcomes set by this standard. Equivalence options may include a specific product, practice, process or system or any combination of these. Contact MAFBNZ as per the contact details to pursue this option.

### 4 Non-Compliance

A container that does not meet the requirements of this standard will not be given biosecurity clearance and will be directed by a MAFBNZ Inspector for further action as considered appropriate to manage the biosecurity risks.

Deliberate non-compliance with the requirements of this standard or negligence leading to non-compliance will lead to increased intervention (e.g. inspection or audit) regimes or prosecution of liable parties under the Biosecurity Act 1993.

### 5 Audit of Sea Containers

A random sample of containers imported into New Zealand will be audited by MAFBNZ to ensure compliance with this import health standard.

## 6 Costs

Where a container check is carried out by an accredited person, MAFBNZ charges are not incurred.

Inspections and other functions undertaken by MAFBNZ will be charged as per the current Biosecurity (Costs) Regulations.

## Biosecurity Requirements

### 7 General Conditions and Responsibilities

#### Requirements

- All containers imported into New Zealand must be clean and free of biosecurity pests and contamination.

#### Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of the party importing sea containers or deemed to be in control of specific actions required by this standard to ensure compliance with this standard.

#### ***Designation of regulatory interest of containers***

*Containers will be designated high regulatory interest if:*

- *They are considered by MAFBNZ profiling to have a higher chance of being contaminated with biosecurity pests or material;*
- *They have absent or incomplete information;*
- *They are sourced from countries with 'high risk status'.*

*Containers of high regulatory interest will require further MAFBNZ intervention.*

## 8 Information

### 8.1 Information required prior to container arrival

Information for all containers arriving in New Zealand must be sent to and received by MAFBNZ in the current approved manner (refer to section 8.1 of the reference document) at least 12 hours prior to container arrival. The information will be assessed by MAFBNZ to determine the regulatory interest of a container and subsequent actions to be taken.

Containers with absent or incomplete information will be deemed of high regulatory interest and managed as per section 9.

A container may not be removed from the first port of discharge until the required information has been sent to and received and assessed by MAFBNZ and a MAFBNZ direction (e.g. BACC) or Customs delivery order issued.

## 8.2 Information required to be sent to transporters and transitional facilities

Prior to containers being transported from a port to a transitional facility or between transitional facilities for devanning or treatment, the importer or importer's agent must provide all relevant information (e.g. MAFBNZ BACC direction or Customs delivery order) to the transporter and transitional facility.

## 9 Ports

### 9.1 Discharge and inspection requirements for all containers

After discharge from a vessel, all containers must be placed on a hard sealed area free from debris and soil. A container cannot be removed from the first port of discharge - *including movement to transitional facilities, inland depots or for transshipment by road or rail*, until the following requirements have been met:

- All container information is sent to and has been received and assessed by MAFBNZ; and

EITHER:

- MAFBNZ has processed containers of high regulatory interest within 48 hours of discharge;

OR:

- An accredited person or a person operating under the supervision or control of an accredited person has externally checked containers of low regulatory interest within 48 hours of discharge;

OR:

- Containers are managed under an equivalent decontamination or container management system approved by MAFBNZ.

### 9.2 Containers for transshipment by sea

Containers for transshipment by sea must be covered by one of the following options:

EITHER:

- Containers of high regulatory interest are processed by MAFBNZ Inspectors at the first port of discharge if they will remain on the port for longer than 12 hours; and
- Containers of low regulatory interest are checked by an accredited person or a person operating under the supervision or control of an accredited person at the first port of first discharge;

OR:

- The first port of discharge must notify the following port of discharge of any containers of high regulatory interest that still require MAFBNZ inspection.

### 9.3 Detection and management of contamination on containers at ports

Any biosecurity pests or contamination must be removed prior to a container leaving the port area. The container and/or contamination must be secured and MAFBNZ notified.

**When live organisms, e.g. insects, mobile animals or egg/larval masses are found, they must be secured and MAFBNZ notified immediately.**

## 10 Transportation

All movements of uncleared containers must be authorised by a MAFBNZ direction (e.g. BACC), a Customs delivery order or covered by a container management system. Containers must be delivered to the transitional facility authorised on the MAFBNZ direction for devanning. No one is permitted to transport an uncleared container to a transitional facility until they have received notification (e.g. MAFBNZ BACC direction or Customs delivery order) to do so. Refer to section 8.2.

## 11 Transitional Facilities

### 11.1 Requirements for transitional facilities and accredited persons

The requirements for transitional facilities and accredited persons for container unpacking are specified in the MAFBNZ standard – [BNZ-STD-TFGEN: General Transitional Facilities for Uncleared Goods](#).

### 11.2 Inspection requirements for containers at transitional facilities

No person is permitted to open or devan a container until notification (e.g. MAFBNZ BACC direction or Customs delivery order) has been received at the transitional facility where the container is delivered. Refer to section 8.2.

Containers with uncleared biosecurity risk cargo (including wood packaging material), must be devanned at a transitional facility in the presence of a MAFBNZ Inspector or an accredited person (this will be specified on the MAFBNZ BACC). All cargo must meet relevant MAFBNZ import health standard requirements, and may require MAFBNZ inspection to obtain biosecurity clearance.

Containers with uncleared cargo that is not considered a biosecurity risk must be devanned at a transitional facility in the presence of an accredited person.

Freight of all kind (FAK) containers must receive biosecurity clearance at the first transitional facility where devanning occurs.

### 11.3 Wood packaging and packaging material

All wood packaging must be checked for ISPM15 markings and for contamination. If wood packaging is contaminated, has no ISPM15 markings or if restricted or other contaminated packaging material is found, the material is to be segregated and secured and treated as per the MAFBNZ standard [Wood Packaging Material from All Countries](#).

#### 11.4 Detection and management of contamination and un-manifested cargo in or on containers at transitional facilities

If any biosecurity contamination or un-manifested cargo is found during routine checks, it must be segregated and secured and MAFBNZ notified.

**When live organisms, e.g. insects, mobile animals or egg/larval masses are found, they must be secured and MAFBNZ notified immediately.**

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