

Reference Document  
for the  
Import Health Standard  
for  
Sea Containers

MAF Biosecurity New Zealand  
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P.O Box 2526  
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New Zealand

## Approval

The associated MAFBNZ standard – *SEACO: Import Health Standard for Sea Containers* specifies the legal requirements for importing sea containers into New Zealand. This reference document is approved as the reference document for the import health standard for sea containers from all countries.

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**Date**

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## Foreword

This reference document is intended to accompany the *Import Health Standard for Sea Containers*. This reference document outlines the processes that supply chain parties and MAFBNZ Inspectors should follow to control, manage or eradicate biosecurity pests and contamination associated with sea containers unless equivalent systems or processes have been set up as per section 3.

## Review and Amendment

This reference document 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 reference document is used.

## Contacts

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

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

## General Information

### 1 Introduction

This reference document is designed to clarify and provide extra information about how the requirements of the *Import Health Standard for Sea Containers* could be met. The desired outcome of the requirements in the standard is to effectively and efficiently manage biosecurity pests and contamination associated with imported sea containers and packaging to obtain biosecurity clearance.

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 reference document and the associated standard, definitions are as per the Biosecurity Act 1993. The following specific definitions also apply:

#### **BACC**

Biosecurity Authority Clearance Certificate issued by MAFBNZ that provides either biosecurity clearance or direction for further action.

#### **Biosecurity contamination**

Animals, insects or other invertebrates (alive or dead, in any life cycle stage, including egg casings), organic material of animal origin (including blood, bones, hair, flesh, secretions, excretions), viable or non-viable plants or plant products (including fruit, seeds, leaves, twigs, roots, bark), other organic material (including fungi), soil or water where these are not the manifested cargo being imported.

#### **Check**

A visual examination by an accredited person to detect the presence of biosecurity pests and contamination. Such a check is to be carried out during the routine handling and movement of containers and as per the accredited person's training.

#### **Customs delivery order (CDO)**

Direction issued by the New Zealand Custom Service that allows for a container to be transported to another location.

#### **Equivalence**

The use of different biosecurity risk management interventions to achieve the same or better outcomes set by the import health standard.

#### **High regulatory interest**

Containers which are considered by MAFBNZ profiling to have a higher chance of being contaminated with biosecurity pests or material, OR that have absent or incomplete information, OR are sourced from countries with 'high risk status'. Containers of high regulatory interest will require further MAFBNZ intervention.

## **Inspection**

A visual examination by a MAFBNZ Inspector to detect the presence of biosecurity pests and contamination. An inspection does not require magnification but may require additional lighting if the inspection is carried out at night or within a building.

## **Low regulatory interest**

Containers which are considered by MAFBNZ profiling to have a lower chance of being contaminated, that have complete and compliant information and are not sourced from countries of 'high risk status'.

## **Packaging material**

Material used to brace or hold cargo within a container such as cases, crates, boxes, drums, and cartons, dunnage and wedges.

## **Quarantine declaration**

Declaration attesting to the interior and exterior cleanliness of a container, whether any wood or restricted packaging material is present and if the wood packaging is ISPM15 compliant.

## **Restricted packaging material**

Packaging that includes soil, peat, moss, used sacking material, hay, straw, chaff and any material contaminated with the above.

## **Transhipped Containers**

- 1. International transhipped container:** A container that arrives in New Zealand from overseas and either remains at the first port of arrival or moves around New Zealand (by land or sea) but is ultimately destined for devanning overseas.
- 2. Domestic transhipped container:** A container that arrives in New Zealand from overseas and moves around New Zealand (by land or sea) which is ultimately destined for devanning in New Zealand.

## **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 the standard. Equivalence options may include a specific product, practice, process or system or any combination of these.

Equivalence systems that mitigate the need for specific actions or requirements of the import health standard require formal approval from MAFBNZ to operate. Please contact MAFBNZ as per the contact details to pursue this option.

## **4 Non-Compliance**

Actions to be taken when non-compliance with the standard is identified will be split into two areas:

1. Biosecurity contamination found on or in containers, and
2. Actions taken by supply chain parties.

The area of non-compliance will indicate which party is held responsible for the non-compliance and for further intervention by MAFBNZ.

### 1. Contamination found on or in containers

MAFBNZ inspection regimes of containers are determined by the level of regulatory interest assigned and are based on information received about the container, historical inspection data and the effectiveness of management systems in place (also see 'high regulatory interest' definition). Container inspection regimes can be increased or decreased for parties responsible for ensuring requirements are met.

<b>Non-compliance area</b>	<b>Party responsible</b>
Contaminated empty containers on arrival	Shipping line
Contaminated full containers (external) on arrival	Shipping line / Exporter
Contaminated full containers (internal) on arrival	Exporter / Importer
Undeclared cargo	Exporter / Importer

### 2. Actions taken by supply chain parties

Where an action (or in-action) by a party results in non-compliance with the standard MAFBNZ will hold the party deemed to have control of the action responsible. Interventions taken by MAFBNZ include assigning containers 'high regulatory interest' or increased intervention (e.g. inspection or audit) regimes for parties responsible.

<b>Examples of non-compliance</b>	<b>Party responsible</b>
Information absent or incomplete	Importer / Agent
On-port checks not carried out on low regulatory interest containers	Port
Notification not provided to subsequent ports of transhipped containers (where applicable)	Port
Notification not provided to transporter or transitional facility	Importer or Agent
Delivery to incorrect transitional facility	Transporter
Checks not carried out on low regulatory interest containers and associated packaging at transitional facilities	Transitional facility

## 5 Audit of Sea Containers

The MAFBNZ standard [Requirements for the Audit of Sea Containers](#) outlines the requirements for sea container audits.

## 6 Costs

The following web-link is to 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 importer or consolidator to ensure that the interior of all loaded containers they import comply with the requirements of this standard.
- It is the responsibility of the shipping line to ensure that the exterior of all loaded containers they carry to New Zealand comply with the requirements of this standard.
- It is the responsibility of the shipping line to ensure that all empty containers they import comply with the requirements of this standard.
- It is the responsibility of accredited persons or persons operating under the supervision or control of an accredited person at ports to check containers are externally free of biosecurity pests and contamination prior to leaving the port of discharge.
- It is the responsibility of accredited persons or persons operating under the supervision or control of an accredited person at transitional facilities to check containers are internally free of biosecurity pests and contamination during devanning.
- It is the responsibility of all parties involved in the handling of containers to visually check containers during routine handling and movement of containers for biosecurity pests and contamination, to contain any biosecurity pests or contamination found and report them to MAFBNZ.

#### *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'.*

MAFBNZ has designated the following countries and ports as having 'high risk status' due to the occurrence of significant biosecurity pests in those countries.

- Wallis Island;
- Futuna Island;
- Papua New Guinea;
- Vanuatu;
- Russian Far East ports south of 60° latitude and west of 147° longitude.

## 8 Information

### 8.1 Information required prior to container arrival

The current approved manner for sending container information to MAFBNZ is via an electronic import entry to the New Zealand Customs Service or by sending discharge lists, manifests or bills of lading to MAFBNZ directly. The information will be assessed by MAFBNZ either electronically or manually to determine the regulatory interest of a container and subsequent actions to be taken.

The following information must be supplied to MAFBNZ at least 12 hours prior to container arrival:

#### Specific information

- Container number;
- Container type;
- Country of origin;
- Port of loading;
- New Zealand port of discharge;
- Importer details;
- Transitional facility destination in New Zealand;
- A complete and accurate description of the cargo or tariff code, including all packaging;
- Quarantine declaration.

The following information should also be supplied to MAFBNZ where applicable:

- Exporter details;
- Treatment certification.

#### Quarantine Declaration

A quarantine declaration is required for all containers destined for New Zealand. Annual quarantine declarations may be approved for use where one exporter regularly supplies the same cargo to one importer in New Zealand.

A quarantine declaration is not mandatory for international transhipped containers not destined for New Zealand, however one may be provided to or requested by MAFBNZ in some cases to assist with container clearance or movement.

All containers without a quarantine declaration will be deemed of high regulatory interest and must be managed as per section 9.

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

Relevant information (e.g. BACC or Customs delivery order) is required to be sent to the transporter and transitional facility to ensure containers are delivered to the declared facility and all parties know the biosecurity directions issued.

## 9 Ports

### 9.1 Discharge and inspection requirements for all containers

To minimise the spread of contamination, containers must be placed on a hard sealed area separate from soil and vegetation.

#### Containers of high regulatory interest

MAFBNZ Inspectors will process containers of *high regulatory interest* at ports using one of the following methods:

EITHER:

- All containers must receive an external 6-sided inspection and empty containers must receive an internal inspection by MAFBNZ as soon as practicable, but in all cases must be completed within 48 hours of discharge from the vessel;

OR:

- Containers must be directed for fumigation as per the MAFBNZ treatment standard [BNZ-STD-ABTRT](#) within 48 hours of discharge;

OR:

- Containers must be directed for cleaning as per the MAFBNZ treatment standard [BNZ-STD-ABTRT](#) within 48 hours of discharge;

OR:

- Containers must be managed under an equivalent decontamination or container management system approved by MAFBNZ (e.g. offshore container hygiene system or containers are stored in an area that is appropriately managed to contain biosecurity pests and approved by MAFBNZ).

NB: Containers carrying cargo of biosecurity interest may require further inspection and/or action (e.g. vent sealing) by MAFBNZ prior to leaving the first port of discharge.

#### Containers of low regulatory interest

Accredited persons or persons operating under the supervision or control of an accredited person must check containers of low regulatory interest as per standard operating procedures outlined under the ports of first arrival approval.

### 9.2 Containers for transshipment by sea

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

Biosecurity contamination, for example soil, plant products and restricted packaging material etc, found on or in a container during routine checks must be secured in a quarantine bin or other approved receptacle and MAFBNZ notified via container logsheet (as per the accredited persons training).

**When live organisms, e.g. insects, mobile animals or egg masses are found, they must be secured and MAFBNZ notified immediately on 0800 809 966.**

## 10 Transportation

The movement of containers must be authorised by MAFBNZ prior to container movement. Uncleared containers cannot be moved from a port or another transitional facility until transporters have been notified of the transitional facility details to transport the container to. Transporters must deliver the container to the nominated approved facility before it can be opened or devanned.

## 11 Transitional Facilities

### 11.1 Requirements for transitional facilities and accredited persons

The requirements for transitional facilities and accredited persons are contained 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.

A MAFBNZ BACC will specify actions that must be undertaken by an accredited person and/or a MAFBNZ Inspector. A Customs delivery order with the authority 'MAF approval given to move from the wharf to an AFT' allows an accredited person to devan a container, check the container and goods for contamination and distribute the goods as required.

A FAK container must receive biosecurity clearance at the first transitional facility where devanning occurs. Cargo may receive biosecurity clearance at the first transitional facility OR it may be delivered to another transitional facility for clearance. The movement of any uncleared cargo (e.g. originally part of a FAK) to another facility must be authorised by MAFBNZ and moved as per the requirements of the MAFBNZ standard [BNZ-STD-TFGEN: General Transitional Facilities for Uncleared Goods](#).

### 11.3 Wood packaging and packaging material

The following web-link is to the MAFBNZ standard for [Wood Packaging Material from All Countries](#) and outlines the ISPM15 and other requirements all wood packaging must meet to be given biosecurity clearance.

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

Biosecurity pests and contamination and restricted packaging material found on or in a container during routine checks must be secured in a quarantine bin or other approved receptacle and MAFBNZ notified via container logsheet (as per the accredited persons training).

If un-manifested cargo is identified, it must be segregated and secured and MAFBNZ notified. This is to ensure un-manifested cargo can be risk assessed and/or inspected by MAFBNZ Inspectors and cargo is not delivered before.

**When live organisms, e.g. insects, mobile animals or egg masses are found, they must be secured and MAFBNZ notified immediately on 0800 809 966.**