

**IMPORT HEALTH STANDARD FOR  
SEA CONTAINERS  
FROM ALL COUNTRIES**

**New Zealand  
MAF Biosecurity Authority Standard:**

**BMG-STD-SEACO**

**SEPTEMBER 2003**

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## **ENDORSEMENT**

Pursuant to the Biosecurity Act 1993 and acting under the authority delegated to me by the Director General of Agriculture and Forestry, I hereby issue this Standard.

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Neil H Hyde  
Chief Technical Officer

Date:

# IMPORT HEALTH STANDARD FOR SEA CONTAINERS FROM ALL COUNTRIES

Issued pursuant to section 22 of the Biosecurity Act 1993

Dated: 13 August 2003

*This import health standard comes into force on 1 September 2003. All sections of the standard come into force on 1 September 2003 unless otherwise specified in the table below. The implementation dates for these sections are listed in the right hand column. The interim requirements for the period up until the final date for implementation are also specified in the table. This does not preclude earlier implementation of the new requirements where the required systems have been established:*

Clause	Requirement	Interim Requirement	Final date for implementation
Section 4	Information required prior to arrival, including the information contained in the quarantine declaration.	Certification requirements contained in revoked standard; Sea Containers from any Country - MAF Regulatory Authority 152.07.02I may continue to be used until implementation date.	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2003
Section 6.1.2 Para 1	Check for contamination on all exterior surfaces of non high risk sea containers by an accredited person.	External check requirements contained in revoked standard; Sea Containers from any Country - MAF Regulatory Authority 152.07.02I may continue until implementation date. I.e. MAF will remain responsible for inspection of the exterior of containers.	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2003
Section 6.2	Requirement that all containers be unpacked at an approved transitional facility in the presence of a MAF accredited person.	Internal container check requirements contained in revoked standard; Sea Containers from any Country - MAF Regulatory Authority 152.07.02I may continue until implementation date. I.e. MAF will remain responsible for the interior inspection of containers. Inspection of cargo will remain MAF's responsibility	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2003

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document specifies the requirements to be met for the effective management of biosecurity risks associated with the importation of sea containers and associated packaging of containerised cargo into New Zealand.
- 1.2 All containers must be deemed to be free from contamination before they will be given biosecurity clearance by an inspector.

Note: Cargo may be subject to specific import health standards where applicable.

## 2. REVIEW OF IMPORT HEALTH STANDARD

- 2.1 The import health standard may be reviewed and amended if there are changes in New Zealand's import policy or the biosecurity status of an originating country, or for any other reason, at the discretion of the Director Border Management.

## 3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purposes of this standard the following definitions apply.

**Approved** - Approved by the Director-General MAF, or delegate, for the intended purpose

**Accredited person** - A person who has attended and passed a course in basic biosecurity awareness associated with imported sea containers and container checking, and has been approved (see definition) to conduct certain checks under this standard. An accredited person may be the operator or staff member of a transitional facility, a stevedore, port company staff or a private contractor.

**Biosecurity clearance** - A clearance issued by an inspector under section 26 of the Biosecurity Act 1993.

**Certification** – a document that attests to the status of a consignment, including a container (see Phytosanitary certificate, Quarantine declaration)

**Check by an Accredited person** – Visual observation of a container to detect the presence of contaminants.

**Container** - A sea freight container built to specifications promulgated by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), or a similar structure.

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

**Decontamination Facility** - A facility meeting the requirements of MAFRA 152.04.03 Appendix III (Cars, Car parts, Equipment and Containers (Decontamination)).

**Director Border Management** - The Director Border Management, New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, or any person who for the time being may lawfully exercise and perform the power and functions of the Director Border Management. This position is a Chief Technical Officer pursuant to s101 of the Biosecurity Act 1993.

**High Risk Container** - Containers which have a higher than average probability of being contaminated or carrying unmanifested cargo or unmanifested/prohibited packaging material. Such containers will be identified by risk profiling.

**Inspection** – A visual inspection by an Inspector, of sufficient thoroughness to detect the presence of insects and other contaminants that can be seen on or in the container. Such an inspection does not require magnification but may require additional lighting if the inspection is carried out at night or within a building.

**Inspector** - As defined by the Biosecurity Act 1993.

**MAF** - Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, New Zealand.

**Packaging** - Packing material of the cargo within the container such as cases, crates, boxes, drums, and cartons. This also includes material used to stabilise cargo within the container such as dunnage and wedges.

**Phytosanitary Certificate** – An official document that attests to the phytosanitary status of risk goods, including a container.

**Port area** - The environs of those areas approved as Places of First Arrival, in accordance with the border standard- Requirements for Place of First Arrival (Ports), for craft, and adjacent associated facilities at which the container arrived in New Zealand.

**Quarantine Declaration** – Declaration attesting to the interior and exterior cleanliness of the container and whether any restricted packing or packaging is used within the cargo or container.

**Restricted packaging material** - Soil, peat, raw green or contaminated moss, used sacking material, hay, straw, chaff and any packing material contaminated with the above. Wood packaging is also included - materials such as cases, crates and pallets and wood used to separate, brace, protect or secure cargo in transit. [see <http://www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/imports/forests/standards/non-viable-forest-produce/wood-packaging.htm>]

**Transitional Facility (containers)** - A place approved as a transitional facility in accordance with section 39 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 for the purpose of inspection, storage, treatment, quarantine or holding of containers.

**Transitional Facility Operator** - A person approved as the operator of a Transitional facility pursuant to s40 the Biosecurity Act 1993.

## **4. INFORMATION REQUIRED PRIOR TO ARRIVAL**

4.1 All imported containers and any loaded cargo must be covered by the following documentation:

### **4.1.1 Quarantine Declaration ( see Appendix I)**

A document signed by a manager of the packing or exporter facility that declares; that a container was inspected internally and externally and was found to be free of contaminants, and the type of packing materials and wood packaging used.

### **4.1.2 Other Documentation**

- Container Number
- Origin (where the container was packed)
- The port at which the container was first loaded aboard a vessel for shipment to New Zealand
- Exporter
- Importer
- Destination in New Zealand (must be a transitional facility approved for the unpacking or storage of containers)
- A complete and accurate description of the contents, including packaging
- Treatment certification if applicable.

4.2 No container shall be removed from the port area until the required documentation has been provided to MAF, and MAF has notified the port company regarding the status of the container (i.e., whether the container can be removed). Containers with non-complying documentation will be considered high risk and dealt with accordingly.

## **5. REQUIREMENTS FOR DISCHARGE AND HOLDING OF CONTAINERS**

5.1 After discharge from the vessel, containers not for immediate delivery are to be placed on a hard sealed area free from soil, weeds and vegetation.

## **6. REQUIREMENTS FOR INSPECTION**

The requirements for inspection are based on four components of biosecurity risk associated with containers as covered by this import health standard:

- the exterior surfaces
- the interior surfaces
- the packing and packaging within the container
- the cargo within the container.

Note: Packaging materials and cargo may be subject to specific import health standards.

## 6.1 EXTERIOR SURFACES OF CONTAINERS

### 6.1.1 Requirements for high risk containers

6.1.1.1 All sea containers arriving in New Zealand and identified by MAF as high risk for external contamination and notified as such to the port company will be:

- brought to the MAF inspection area for six-sided inspection as soon as practicable, but in all cases within 8 hours after discharge; OR
- fumigated with methyl bromide at 48gms/m<sup>3</sup> for 24 hours at a temperature of at least 10°C;

OR

- accompanied by an official certificate from an overseas National Plant Protection Organisation attesting to the container's freedom from external contamination of any type;

OR

- subject to a decontamination or equivalent quality system process approved by the Director, Border Management.

### 6.1.2 Requirements for other containers

6.1.2.1 All sea containers accompanied by a 'Quarantine Declaration for Containers' in respect of internal and external contamination shall be checked for recontamination en route during discharge and handling at the port of arrival. This check by an accredited person will involve observation of external surfaces of a container for contaminants. The observation may be conducted in conjunction with routine unloading and handling processes.

6.1.2.2 If contamination is observed, the container shall be detained and MAF advised within four hours. MAF shall direct action to be taken in respect of the risk.

6.1.2.3 The port company arrangements to meet the above requirements shall be approved by a MAF inspector.

6.1.2.4 Decontamination (e.g. washing) or overseas equivalent quality system processes approved by the Director, Border Management, may be used in lieu of inspection (see section 8). Containers covered by overseas systems will be subject to audit inspection by MAF. Empty containers may be decontaminated externally and internally in accordance with a MAF-approved system in lieu of the external and internal inspection requirements.



- 6.1.2.5 Containers that have been inspected, checked or otherwise deemed to be free from external contamination will be directed to an approved transitional facility for container unpacking (loaded containers) or a facility approved for container unpacking/inspection and/or cleaning (empty containers) or storage. Such facilities may be located at the port of arrival or elsewhere.
- 6.1.2.6 No container may be removed from the port of arrival until authorised by MAF.

## 6.2 INTERIOR SURFACES OF CONTAINERS

- 6.2.1 Loaded containers with manifested risk goods requiring biosecurity clearance (including wood packaging material as specified in 6.3), or those with inadequate contents and/or packaging documentation, will be unpacked in the presence of an accredited person at a transitional facility approved for both container unpacking and for any risk goods specified. The risk goods, except for wood packaging, will be inspected by a MAF inspector.
- 6.2.2 Loaded containers, other than those with manifested risk goods, will be unpacked at a transitional facility approved for container unpacking in the presence of an accredited person.
- 6.2.3 Containers of personal effects may be unpacked at the importer's address, provided that: the container is placed onto a sealed surface if removed from the transport vehicle, and; an accredited person (the transport operator or an employee of the removal company) is present.  
The check carried out by the accredited person will occur immediately prior to, during and at the completion of the unpacking of cargo as follows:
- upon delivery the external surfaces of the container shall be checked for contamination
  - during unpacking the cargo must be verified that it is as described on the bill of lading or manifest
  - during and after unpacking. all internal surfaces must be checked for contaminants
  - during and after unpacking verification that no untreated wooden or prohibited packaging material is present.
- 6.2.4 Empty containers will be checked by an accredited person at an approved transitional facility, checking all visible external surfaces and all internal surfaces for contaminants . Alternatively, empty containers may be externally and internally decontaminated by a system approved by the Director, Border Management.

- 6.2.5 If contamination, including contamination of cargo or packaging, unmanifested cargo, non-compliant wood or prohibited packaging material (see 6.3 below) is found during the above checks, the container is to be segregated or secured and a MAF inspector notified as soon as possible, but in all cases within 8 hours. If live organisms are seen, a MAF inspector must be notified immediately (appropriate contact details will be available for each facility). The MAF inspector is responsible for requiring suitable action to be taken with regards to the contamination. In some cases, this may involve directing the accredited person to undertake certain actions, for which training has been provided as part of the accreditation process.
- 6.2.6 Note that certain types of cargo can carry contamination that can ultimately contaminate the container. This may include items that are manufactured and stored outside awaiting shipping, such as bricks, pipes, and steel formwork. If contamination of either the cargo or container is found, MAF must be notified as specified above.
- 6.2.7 The checks above, including any contamination observed and subsequent actions, are to be recorded in a manner acceptable to MAF and be made available upon request.
- 6.2.8 Biosecurity clearance for the container may be issued by MAF, either as a result of MAF inspection or check by an accredited person with recommendation to MAF for clearance.

### **6.3 CONTAINER AND CARGO PACKAGING**

- 6.3.1 Untreated wood packaging within a container must be checked by an accredited person to ensure it is clean new wood, free of bark, live organisms, insect damage and decay. If the wood does not meet these criteria, then an inspector must be notified for advice.

### **6.4 CONTAINERISED CARGO**

- 6.4.1 Containers with uncleared biosecurity risk cargo must be unpacked at a transitional facility that is approved for those risk goods as well as for receiving containers. Containers without risk cargo that do not otherwise require inspection by a biosecurity inspector (see 6.2 and 6.3 above) may be unpacked at a transitional facility in the presence of an accredited person. If it cannot be ascertained from the information supplied or sought that the container is free of biosecurity risk cargo, then the container must be unpacked at a transitional facility and any biosecurity risk cargo inspected at a transitional facility by an inspector.

## 7. REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSITIONAL FACILITIES AND OPERATORS

7.1 The minimum requirements for a transitional facility for container unpacking are:

- a hard stand area upon which the container is placed during unloading
- freedom from weeds, rubbish or debris for 10 metres around the container
- a means of recording containers inspected, contamination or risk goods found and actions taken
- a supply of dual-action aerosol insecticide having both knock-down and residual action properties (such as tetramethrin 4g/l for knock down and permethrin 1g/l for residual).
- a secure receptacle for sweepings and/or other contamination
- an operator (accredited person).

7.2 Minimum requirements for the accredited person:

- must have sufficient authority within the company to make decisions concerning the unpacking of containers.
- required to have undertaken and passed a course in basic biosecurity awareness and container inspection that is approved by MAF.

7.3 Specific details regarding the operation and approval of transitional facilities are available in the border technical standard for transitional facilities *Requirements for Transitional Facilities for Sea Containers*. Approval of the transitional facility and the operator will be by the Director, Border Management.

## 8. USE OF APPROVED EQUIVALENT SYSTEMS

8.1 Alternative methods of dealing with the biosecurity risks associated with containers may be approved by the Director, Border Management on an individual basis if the proposed system can be proven to provide an equivalent standard of biosecurity efficacy as the existing standard. Examples include: inspection of containers prior to shipping, bilateral agreement with MAF's counterpart organisation in an overseas country and automated container washing.

## **9. AUDIT OF CONTAINER CLEARANCE PROCEDURES**

- 9.1 All systems and facilities associated with the clearance of sea containers shall be subject to audit. Where non-conformance during audits (or at other times) is found, MAF may suspend or cancel approval of the system or facility. If the non-conformance is in respect of external contamination, related containers may require MAF inspection at the port of discharge. If the non-conformance is in internal contamination, packaging or cargo, containers may require MAF inspection during unpacking at transitional facility or wharf areas approved as facilities for that purpose.
- 9.2 Where a quarantine declaration is false or intended to conceal a quarantine breach, MAF will investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute under the Biosecurity Act 1993.

Note: details of the audit regime for container clearance, including actions taken for non-compliance, are contained in the document *Audits of Sea Container Clearance Procedures*.

## **10. COSTS**

- 10.1 Where a container check is carried out by an accredited person, there is no specific charge by MAF.
- 10.2 Inspections and approvals and other functions undertaken by MAF will be charged as per the Biosecurity (Costs) Regulations 2003. This includes inspections carried out by MAF inspectors at the port of discharge or at a transitional facility.

## **11. BIOSECURITY CLEARANCE**

- 11.1 Providing that a container meets the conditions of this import health standard it may be given a biosecurity clearance pursuant to section 26 of the Biosecurity Act 1993. Clearance will be issued by MAF after the unpacked container has been found free of contamination by either a biosecurity inspector or an accredited person.

## **12. ENQUIRIES**

All communications concerning this import health standard should be addressed to:

Director, Border Management  
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry  
P O Box 106231  
Auckland  
NEW ZEALAND  
Fax: 64-9-369 5904

**Quarantine Declaration to Accompany Containers to New Zealand**

Packer or Exporter Letterhead

**Quarantine Declaration for Containers**

Vessel Name:

Voyage Number:

Container Number or Numbers:

**Cleanliness and Restricted Packing and Packaging Declaration**

**1. Cleanliness**

At the time of packing, the container/s were inspected internally and externally, and are clean and free from contamination with live organisms, material of plant or animal origin, soil and water. .... Yes No

**2. Packaging Materials**

Has any soil, peat, raw green or contaminated moss, used sacking material, hay, straw, chaff or any packing material contaminated with the above been used within the container/s listed above? .... Yes No

**3. Wood Packaging**

Has any wood packaging been used within the container/s such as cases, crates, pallets or wood used to separate, brace, protect or secure cargo in transit?..... Yes No

3a. If yes to 2 above, has the wood been treated? ..... Yes No

3b. If yes to 2a above, how was the wood treated? .....

3c. Is a certificate for the treatment of this wood available?..... Yes No

**I certify that the above is true and correct.**

Signed

Name

Designation

Date

**If the information required above is not supplied or is found to be erroneous, it may result in significant delays and increased costs on arrival in New Zealand.**