

August 18, 2005

MR'S ADVISORY TO SHIPPING No. A-28-2005

TO: ALL STEAMSHIP AGENTS, OWNERS, AND OPERATORS

SUBJECT: GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DECLARING CONTAINERS AND OTHER CARGO IN THE EDCS SYSTEM

1. The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) reminds masters and officers that they are responsible for providing accurate information through the EDCS system in order for the ACP to assess the correct transiting tolls. They are also reminded of the need to provide ACP Boarding Officers with accurate and updated information regarding the cargo on board, including details on the size and number of containers carried on the main deck. As part of routine inspections, ACP Boarding Officers will review the stowage plan for the cargo being carried on the main deck. Such plan must state the size and number, as well as the location, of each container within the stowage plan. If the vessel does not possess a stowage plan, the ACP may accept any other official document or diagram that will provide this information. In the event that said information is not available, or possible discrepancies are detected, a detailed onboard inspection will be conducted by the ACP Boarding Officer. If a discrepancy is confirmed, a charge for the inspection will be assessed.

2. The ACP admeasurement system conforms to international standards, to include basic characteristics of containers used by vessels designed to carry containers. The ACP has adopted the definition for freight container as established by the *International Standards Organization*, as stated below, which should be utilized as a guideline for reporting the number of containers carried onboard in the EDCS system.

“Freight container shall mean an article of transport equipment designed to facilitate the carriage of goods, either packaged or unpackaged, by one or more modes of transport without intermediate reloading. It shall be of a permanent enclosed character, rigid and strong enough for repeated use and must be fitted with devices facilitating its handling, particularly in transfer between conveyances and from one mode of transport to another... A freight container may be used as a packaging, if the applicable requirements are met. It may also be used to perform the function of an overpack.”

3. In most cases, containers utilized for shipment of goods are regulated by ISO standard 668:1995, which classifies containers with dimensions of 20, 40, and 45 feet in length. Although there are other containers with different dimensions, the dimensions stated above should cover most cases. However, in cases whereby containers transported by vessels are not included within the ISO standard 668:1995, the ACP will determine whether to consider this cargo as containers or as other type of cargo. All cargo that does not meet the specifications of a container must be declared as cargo in the EDCS system, and the master or representative of a vessel should inform

the ACP of this situation prior to arrival in order to avoid confusion at the time of the inspection, which may result in delays.

4. ACP considers containers as cargo regardless of their contents or lack thereof. Containers that are used to transport generators, lashing gears, or that have been modified, will continue to be classified as containers and will be charged as such. A container utilized to fulfill certain tasks, other than carrying cargo, will be considered as part of the vessel's superstructure if the following criteria is met:

- Be completely welded, all around, to the deck. Spot welding or bolts are not acceptable.
- Provide ACP Admeasurement Unit with a copy of an International Tonnage Certificate (ITC 69) that includes this container as part of the superstructure of the vessel.
- Be subject to an inspection and verification by the ACP Admeasurement Unit of such change.

5. When transported, "Flat Racks" will be considered equivalent to an NTT (Number of TEU Transported) Inspection as follows:

- 20' in length is equivalent to a container 20' x 8' x 8.5'
- 40' in length is equivalent to a container 40' x 8' x 9.5'
- 45' in length is equivalent to a container 45' x 8' x 9.5'

6. In cases where "Flat Racks" exceed the dimensions established above, the length and width will be determined and a height of 9.5 feet will be applied. "Flat Racks" will be considered independently, whether loaded or empty. If empty "Flat Racks" are stacked on top of each other, the ACP will only charge for one flat rack, provided the height of the stack does not exceed 9.5 feet; otherwise, an additional "Flat Rack" will be charged. On the other hand, when "Flat Racks" are loaded, and its cargo exceeds 9.5 feet it will not count it as another container.

7. If bins (standard-size open top containers) are carried on deck to store equipment, each bin will be considered as a container.

8. When carrying windmill vanes in modified containers, each one of these containers must be declared separately.

9. Vessels carrying any of the following: fuel oil in excess of the vessel's fuel oil allowance, boxes, research equipment, bait, dunnage carried for discharge and/or reuse by another vessel, banana bags, baggage belonging to paying passengers, more than 50 tons of cable on cable ships, or LPG in cargo tank systems used to produce and maintain the desired cooling for cargo tanks in excess of 2% of the vessel summer deadweight tonnage expressed in long tons must declare these items as cargo, and shall be assessed tolls as laden.

10. Students on training vessels and scientists on research vessels must be declared as passengers and the laden rate will apply.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

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