



# Preparing Empty Sea Containers for Entry into New Zealand

The **import health standard for sea containers** states that all shipping containers entering New Zealand must be clean and free of regulated pests.

Biosecurity New Zealand, part of the Ministry for Primary Industries, is responsible for verifying compliance with this standard. Biosecurity New Zealand officers at our ports inspect a sample of empty containers looking for:

- soil;
- plants, plant material, and seeds;
- insects and signs of insect infestation;
- animals and animal products;
- water;
- fungus.

As an exporter of empty containers to New Zealand, it is your responsibility to ensure containers are clean and free of pests. These guidelines provide information and advice to help with cleaning and storing sea containers.

## Empty container depot, cleaning and storage areas

Empty container depots should have clearly defined areas for:

- unprocessed containers;
- a container cleaning area;
- the storage of clean processed containers.

All cleaning and storage areas should be free of weeds, rubbish, and other debris. These provide ideal habitats for pests such as ants.

A designated storage area for cleaned containers should be:

- located at least 5 metres from any favourable pest habitat (vegetation, drains, etc);
- regularly inspected and maintained to ensure it is clean and free of debris;
- clearly designated as a clean storage area only for clean containers.

When cleaned containers are delivered from the depot to the port, all operators (hoist drivers, truck drivers, and stevedores) must be aware of the cleanliness requirements and conduct visual checks of the exterior surfaces. Particular attention should be given to the underside and corner castings. Any contamination must be removed.

Ideally, the cleaned containers should be delivered to a designated clean storage area at the port before loading.



## Container cleaning process

All containers must be cleaned in the designated cleaning area. If cleaning after dark, there must be adequate lighting.

All loose contaminants inside the container should be removed and swept out. Washing must be carried out with high-pressure water blasters. All six surfaces, internal and external, must be thoroughly cleaned. Establishing a set order for the wash procedure (eg. top to bottom, rear to front) will ensure all container surfaces are cleaned.

## External wash

Start with the roof of the container and then the sides. Special attention needs to be paid to corner castings, rubber door seals, and reefer motor areas. Cables should be removed so cable storage areas can be cleaned.



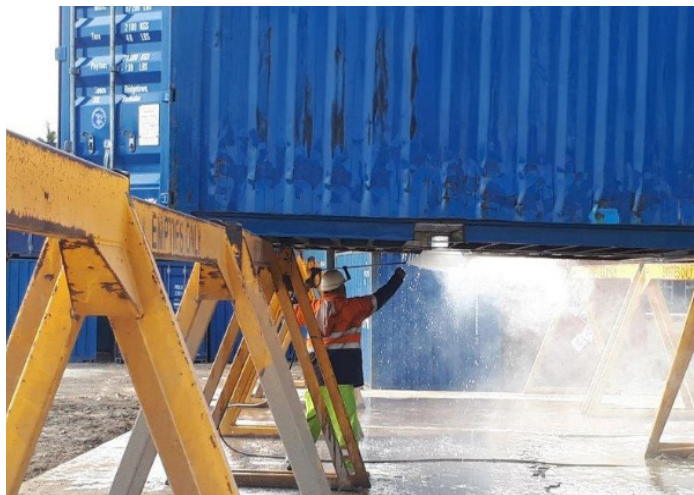
## Internal wash

Sweep or remove any debris from inside the container. All six internal surfaces require cleaning. Special attention needs to be paid to reefer compartments, drain plugs, and rubber door seals. Also check that any cracks or joints in the floor do not contain any contaminants.



## Underside wash

Waterblast the underside once the container is safely supported on a stand with the doors open. Special attention must be paid to corner castings, bottom rubber door seals, fork slots, rails, and any cracks or joints. Any contamination remaining after water blasting (lodged in the underseal compound) needs to be removed using a metal scraper.



## Additional wash checks

After cleaning, the container should be checked to ensure all contaminants have been removed. Sometimes water blasting the underside can force contaminants back into the container.

Once cleaning is complete, all doors must be closed and latched to prevent pests from re-entering the container.



## Maintaining compliance on vessels

It is highly recommended that, where possible, any clean processed containers are segregated from unprocessed containers to prevent the risk of cross-contamination.

Vessels should also maintain strict pest management plans, particularly for high-impact pests such as invasive ants and Giant African Snail (GAS).