

CONTAINER INSPECTION IN USA DESTINATION EUROPE

To ensure a shipping container can legally and safely depart the USA for Europe, a container surveyor must inspect the unit against international safety standards, structural criteria, and export regulations.

1. CSC Plate Verification

- **CSC Safety Approval:** Verify that the container has a valid, legible CSC (International Convention for Safe Containers) Plate.
- **Validity Dates:** Check the manufacture date and the next required re-examination date (typically valid for 5 years from initial build, and subsequent periodic examinations).
- **ACEP/Inspection Decal:** Confirm whether the container falls under an Approved Continuing Examination Program (ACEP) or has an up-to-date inspection sticker affixed.

2. Structural Integrity & Exterior Inspection

- **Walls, Roof, and Corner Castings:** Inspect for severe dents, tears, holes, buckling, or corrosion that compromise stacking, lifting, or security.
- **Understructure:** Use a forklift or visual access to check the crossmembers, fork pockets, and bottom side rails for rust, cracks, or structural wear.
- **ISO Code and Markings:** Verify that the container ID, owner's marks, size/type code, and max gross/tare weight numbers are clear, accurate, and match the shipping documentation.

3. Doors, Gaskets, and Sealing

- **Door Operation:** Test the lock rods, cam-keepers, and hinges to ensure the doors swing freely, latch securely, and can be sealed/customs-bolted
- **Rubber Gaskets:** Examine the door gaskets (seals) for dry rot, cracks, or gaps to guarantee watertight and airtight integrity during ocean transit.

4. Interior and Floor Evaluation

- **Flooring:** Check the marine plywood or steel floor for soft spots, deep gouges, oil stains, chemical contamination, or broken planks that could give way under a forklift.
- **Cleanliness (WWT Standard):** Ensure the interior is Wind and Watertight (WWT), dry, free of residual debris, old cargo remnants, or strong odors that could taint European imports.
- **Ventilation:** Check that louvered vents are clear and unblocked to prevent condensation ("container rain").

5. Regulatory & Compliance Checks for Europe

- **ISPM 15 Wood Packaging:** If the container uses wooden pallets, skids, or blocking crates, verify the heat-treatment/fumigation stamp showing compliance with ISPM 15 rules required by the EU.
- **Reefer Units (if applicable):** For refrigerated containers, run a pre-trip inspection (PTI) and verify temperature control and insulation integrity.
- **Surveyor Sign-Off:** Affix or update the inspection/ACEP sticker and issue a formal Cargo-Worthy or CSC survey certificate required by shipping lines and port authorities before loading.