

OVERWEIGHT CONTAINERS AND TPS

Recent reports in the Surabaya Press suggest that there is a problem at TPS concerning overweight containers. What is an overweight container and why should TPS be concerned? There are three reasons, all connected with safety, which concern TPS.

1. There is a maximum weight of cargo which can be loaded into a container, if this weight is exceeded the container could collapse when being lifted not only damaging the container but also the cargo therein and possibly injuring anyone nearby. A container is not full when you cannot put anymore cargo inside. It is full when the weight, clearly marked on the door, is reached, and not exceeded.
2. All terminal container handling equipment has a maximum lifting capacity. If this weight limitation is exceeded the equipment could be damaged or the container could be dropped injuring the lifting equipment driver, truck driver or tally clerk.
3. The weight of containers affects the stability of the ship on which it is loaded. If an incorrect weight is declared the stability and thus the safety of the vessel and its crew could be put at risk.

For these reasons TPS weighs all export containers. This is done by weighing the container and truck on entry to the terminal and the empty truck on departure from the terminal and then automatically deducting the one measurement from the other to obtain the gross container weight. All our weighbridges are checked weekly to ensure that they are correctly calibrated. The system is entirely automatic with no manual intervention in the process by any of our staff. If a container is found to be overweight, i.e. in excess of its approved Gross Weight, all our staffs know it should be rejected.

On occasions this overweight data is not available until the delivering vehicle has exited the terminal. In this case the Shipper will be requested to either unpack some of the cargo or remove the container from the terminal.

There are NO exceptions to the rule that overweight containers will not be shipped. All our staff have been fully briefed as to the reasons for these rules and we find it hard to accept that they would willingly put at risk the lives of their work colleagues by breaching these standard operating procedures..

The allegation that TPS are permitting overweight containers to enter the facility on collection of a "facilitation" fee is hard to believe. Apart from anything else the Gross Weight of the container cannot be established until the delivering truck exits the terminal. However if it does happen then who is to blame, the person requesting the rules to be bent and offering to pay for such a "favor" or the person accepting the bribe. TPS believes both are equally to blame and if such a case can be proved TPS will take action against both parties involved.

The Bill of Lading should clearly state the weight of the cargo but unfortunately this is often not the case. When Freight Rates are based on weight rather than volume there is obviously the temptation for Shippers to misdeclare the weight and thus pay a lower freight rate. This is a very dangerous practice for the reasons stated above and is illegal.

TPS reiterates SAFETY will not be compromised under any circumstances and overweight containers will be blocked from shipment at all times.

TPS Directors, 2 May 2007