

Reefer claims loss prevention

A loss prevention America Focus publication

Phase 6 - Discharge of the Refrigerated Container from the vessel

After the refrigerated container has arrived at the port of discharge, the electric cord to the refrigerated container must be disconnected from the vessel power prior to discharging the container from the vessel. Special care should be exercised to avoid damaging the electric cord and/or the plug during the discharge operation.



The refrigerated container must be drayed to the reefer section of the container yard “reefer pad” and immediately plugged in to shore side power. Once the reefer unit is connected to shore power, the set point temperature and fresh air exchange setting (vent setting) must be checked against the bill of lading information supplied by the shipping line. Any discrepancies in the set point temperature, the discharge and/or return air readings and/or vent setting must immediately be recorded and reported to the shipping line and corrected.

Many claims are filed because of the normal and customary “power off” phase

between the unplugging of the refrigerated container from ship power prior to discharge and plugging in of the refrigerated container to shore power. Minimizing this power off phase to 4 hours or less will greatly reduce the filing of unwarranted claims. Shipping lines should confirm that there are standard operating procedures in place at the terminal to avoid the off-power events with the refrigerated container for no longer than 4 hours. Of note, microprocessor (data logger) and Partlow Chart temperature readings recorded during off-power events are generally not indicative of the cargo temperatures or the air temperatures within the cargo space.

Once the refrigerated container is connected to shore power in the container yard, the set point temperature, the air delivery and return air temperature and the vent setting should be continually monitored and recorded every 6 hours while the container is in the yard and until the container is interchanged for picked up and delivery to onward destinations or final receivers via a feeder or line haul vessel, on-dock train or truck. The refrigerated part low chart should be removed and a new chart installed prior to interchanging the refrigerated container for subsequent truck, rail or ocean transport. Performance problems with the refrigerated container should be corrected as soon as possible while in the container yard.



If an authorized reefer mechanic cannot repair performance and/or technical problems with the refrigerated container in a timely manner, preparations should be made to transload (swing) the cargo into a properly functioning container. A marine cargo surveyor should be appointed to inspect the condition of the cargo and container, document the cargo stowage and record cargo pulp temperatures at forward, middle and aft locations in the load.

For refrigerated containers being loaded to feeder vessels, the shipping line must ensure that the set point temperature and vent setting is relayed to the feeder operator. If the feeder vessel cannot accept the refrigerated container either due to overbooking or late arrival, the shipping line should be notified and actions taken to prevent delay of the container at final destination.

Options for reducing the delay of arrival at final or onward destinations should include loading the refrigerated container on another feeder vessel, booking the container with another carrier commonly known as a slot charter, surface transport by truck or rail or rolling the container to the next feeder vessel. Every effort should be made to avoid "rolling" refrigerated cargo.

For containers being trucked or being loaded to on dock trains for transit to final or onward destinations, the shipping line must pass the set point temperature and vent setting information to the rail or truck operator. If the shipping line is using a clip on or underslung genset during truck or rail transit,

the line must ensure that the genset is “topped off” with enough fuel to cover the transit to final destination or a re-fueling station.

Maintenance records, reefer monitoring logs, microprocessor downloads, equipment interchange receipts (EIR’s) and Partlow charts should be stored at the terminal in an accessible location by date order. The documents should be made available upon request from the shipping lines claims department for a period of 18 months after departure.

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