www.unece.org/trans/wp24/wp24-trends/2011-12-16.html

IMO/ILO/UNECE Guidelines for Packing of Cargo Transport Units

On 6–7 of October, the IMO/ILO/UNECE Working Group of Experts hosted by UNECE in Geneva, met to start the revision of the existing 1997 global IMO/ILO/UNECE Guidelines for Packing of Cargo Transport Units, which will reflect the latest information, best practices and requirements for the safe stowage and packing of cargo in freight containers and vehicles.

The meeting was attended by experts working in the supply change from the transport, shipping and insurance industries as well as governmental bodies to work on the more detailed aspects of the guidelines which will be upgraded to a non-mandatory Code of Practice after the revision.

The use of containers in the transport of goods has continued to grow steadily, but despite all the relevant documentation showing examples of good packing guidelines from different stakeholders, incidents involving poorly secured or overweight containers continue to spike. These incidents have resulted in the injury or death of workers, passengers, bystanders and damage to the infrastructure and cargo - including vehicle rollover.

Apart from the improper packing of containers, the lack of or improper information on the condition of the cargo and improper training of staff on safely securing cargo, has also contributed to serious damages of roll-over accidents on the road. This is of particular importance for import containers since at the moment there is no global harmonization on the safe packing of cargo transport units; just in Japan more than half of the roll-over accidents for the period 2006–2011, involved imported containers. The revised IMO/ILO/UNECE Guidelines will allow key stakeholders in the supply chain to further enhance efficiency and safety of container operations and will be available for Governments to implement into their national legislations. The revised Guidelines are expected to be completed in 2013 with the adoption of the new Code of Practice by UNECE, ILO and IMO in the first half of 2014.

For more information, the meeting report and additional documents for the first session of the Group of Experts are available here.