

PSS Container Operations Audit - Scope and Registration

Purpose

To provide an independent, risk-based assessment of container handling operations, aligned with Safety in Ports guidance SiP003 – Container Handling, and relevant UK health and safety legislation, identifying good practice, areas for improvement, and opportunities to strengthen safety performance and culture.

The audit identifies good practice, areas for improvement, and opportunities to strengthen safety performance and culture at individual ports, while also supporting sector-wide learning.

A consistent audit methodology is applied across all participating ports, enabling benchmarking of performance, identification of common risk themes, and sharing of good practice across the sector.

Members will have the opportunity to send a member of their team to another port audit as an observer.

Audit Approach

- 0.5 day document review (remote).
- 1 day on-site assessment (additional sites on request).
- Structured report including:
 - Good Practice.
 - Actions (required improvements).
 - Opportunities for Improvement.

Document review

Information from the Port

To support the pre-audit review, the following information should be provided in advance:

- Incident and Performance Data.
 - Container-related incident data (previous 12–24 months where available). This information will be obtained from the PSS Incident Dashboard for data contributors.
 - Any internal analysis or trend summaries.
- Procedures and Safe Systems of Work.
 - Vessel operations.
 - Terminal operations.
 - Relevant risk assessments.
- People and Competence.
 - Training and competence arrangements.
- Plant and Equipment.
 - Maintenance and inspection regimes for container handling equipment.
- Supporting Arrangements.
 - Relevant policies or guidance specific to container operations.
 - Any recent audits, inspections, or reviews relating to container handling.
 - Summary of any recent safety culture or workforce engagement initiatives.

Review

PSS will undertake a structured review of the information provided to:

- Understand how container operations are managed on site
- Identify alignment with SiP003 and relevant legislation
- Review incident data to identify headline trends or areas of focus.
- Highlight any gaps, inconsistencies, or areas requiring clarification

Based on the review, PSS will develop targeted lines of enquiry to focus the on-site audit.

On-site audit

Operational observations.

- Vessel operations, including loading, discharge, and lashing activities.
- Terminal operations, including container handling, stacking, and yard movements.
- Interfaces between ship and shore operations.

Core risk areas

- Pedestrian – plant interface.
- Workplace transport and traffic management.
- Container handling equipment.

People and culture.

- Workforce engagement through discussions with operators, stevedores, and lashing crews.
- Understanding of risks, controls, and safe systems of work.
- Confidence in reporting concerns and stopping unsafe work.

Supporting systems.

- Supervision and oversight arrangements.
- Communication.
- Emergency arrangements.

Close out discussion (on-site).

- Immediate feedback on key strengths and areas of concern.

Reporting

Structured audit report

- Identification of good practice.
- Actions required to address gaps.
- Opportunities for improvement to enhance performance.

Findings will contribute to wider PSS insight, supporting benchmarking and the sharing of good practice across the sector.

Audit Observation Opportunities (Optional)

- Participating ports may nominate a representative to attend an audit at another port as an observer.
- Observers will attend in a non-participatory capacity and will not form part of the audit team or influence audit findings.
- Participation is subject to agreement with the host port.

Post audit activities and sector learning

To maximise the value of the audit programme, PSS will facilitate a series of post-audit activities to support benchmarking, shared learning, and continuous improvement across the sector.

Cross-Port Benchmarking Session

- A facilitated session will be held for participating ports to review anonymised findings.
- The session will highlight common themes, emerging risks, and examples of good practice.
- Ports will have the opportunity to compare approaches and share experiences.

Sector Insights and Thematic Analysis

- PSS will collate findings across all audits to identify sector-wide trends.
- Key risk areas, recurring challenges, and examples of effective control measures will be summarised.
- Insights will be used to inform future PSS guidance, campaigns, and support to members.

Action Planning

- Outputs from the audit and benchmarking session will support participating ports in developing targeted action plans.
- PSS will identify opportunities for collective action, including development of guidance, training, or working groups where appropriate.

Ongoing Support (Optional)

- PSS can provide follow-up support to members, for example:
 - Review of progress against actions.
 - Further advice on specific risk areas.
 - Facilitated discussions or workshops on key topics.

PSS Container Operations Audit Scope

Registration

Please confirm participation in the PSS container operations audit programme by completing the details below:

Company information	
Company name	
Company address	
Contact name	
Contact number	
Contact email	

Audits fees are £650 + VAT per day, plus auditor expenses.

Details for audit				
Address of preferred site for audit				
Preferred dates for audit <i>(subject to auditor availability)</i>				
Purchase order number				
I would like a member of my team to attend another audit as an observer	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preferred port to attend (if known)				
I am willing to host a representative from another port as an observer	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>