

98-12: Container Inspection Intervals

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INFORMATION

Intermodal Container Inspection intervals are governed by regulations in 49 CFR Part 452. There have been some questions recently as to the proper intervals for container safety inspections. This Safety Bulletin is a review of the current requirements for inspection.

NEW Containers:

The interval for the initial re-inspection of a new container is 5 years.

EXISTING Containers:

The interval for the re-inspection of existing containers is not to exceed 30 months.

Upon completion of the required inspections, the owner must mark on the safety approval plate (or on the container as close as possible to the safety approval plate) the month and the year *before which* the container must next be examined. This mark can be a decal, stencil, or sticker as long as it is durable enough to remain legible for at least 24 months.

Approved Continuous Examination Program (ACEP): In lieu of the periodic inspections outlined above, the owner may examine the container using an Approved Continuous Examination Program. This program is provided for in the 1983 amendments to the CSC (Convention For Safe Containers) Under this program, the owner must submit a proposal for a continuous program to the agency administering the Container Safety Program in the particular country of the owner's domicile or head office. (In the US, the U.S. Coast Guard administers the ACEP.)

Containers inspected under a continuous examination program must be marked as follows: "**ACEP / USA** (or the country of approval abbreviation) / **19XX** (the year in which the ACEP program was approved) / **XXX** "(an assigned ACEP number.) This marking must be as close as practicable to the safety approval plate.

Inspections under the ACEP are required any time a container undergoes a major repair, or refurbishment, or at the time of an on-hire/off hire interchange. In no case is the time period between through examinations to exceed 30 months.

Thus, the information on a container inspected under a "periodic inspection" program is the "date due" for inspections, while under the ACEP program, the date information simply reflects the year in which the container was entered into the program. In either case, owners must retain records of the examinations until the next inspection is made and recorded.

In the US, the Coast Guard may order a container out of service if it is determined that the container is unsafe or if it has not been timely examined.

ACTION

Employers should be familiar with these container inspection requirements.