

LP 24/2026 Key Points on the 2026 CIC on Cargo Securing

From 1 September to 30 November 2026, the Paris MoU and the Tokyo MoU will jointly run a Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) on Cargo Securing. The Indian Ocean MoU, Mediterranean MoU and Black Sea MoU have formally announced their participation in this joint action. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), in its 2026–2027 Compliance Regulatory Plan, has likewise identified cargo securing and stowage as a key regulatory focus and will support the CIC led by the Tokyo MoU and Indian Ocean MoU. The campaign is expected to cover most international trading ports across Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. Container ships, general cargo ships and multi-purpose vessels operating in these waters that are required to carry a flag-approved Cargo Securing Manual (CSM) are the principal targets of this CIC.

Drawing on industry guidance and technical standards, the Club has reviewed the scope, regulatory basis and common deficiencies of this CIC, with the aim of providing Members' ships with practical pre-inspection guidance and compliance support.

I. Background

This is the second joint cargo-securing CIC by the two MoUs since 2016. The 2016 campaign inspected 5,386 ships, with 19 detentions for securing deficiencies (a detention rate of 0.35%). The 2026 campaign has tightened the criteria substantially: the focus has shifted from paperwork review to on-board physical verification, hands-on crew questioning and full-process record checks. Serious deficiencies may lead to detention.

The campaign is built on data collected from container-loss-at-sea incidents over the past 15 years. It aims to:

- Verify each ship's compliance with SOLAS Chapter VI on cargo loading, stowage and securing, supporting the Marin Top Tier Joint Industry Project's analysis of container-loss causes;
- Identify systemic risks in securing practice, equipment maintenance, crew management and documentation, eliminating the hazards of cargo shift, stack collapse and container loss overboard;
- Harmonise PSC inspection practice worldwide, pushing ship operators and vessels to implement end-to-end management of cargo securing, thereby reducing the risk of cargo damage, hull structural damage, personal injury and marine pollution.

II. Convention References

All inspection items in this CIC are based on the mandatory provisions and guidance in international maritime conventions. Masters and ship management staff must be familiar with:

- SOLAS Chapter V (Safety of Navigation);

- SOLAS Chapter VI (core provisions on cargo stowage and securing);
- CSS Code — MSC.1/Circ.1353/Rev.2, Code of Safe Practice for Cargo Stowage and Securing;
- Guidelines for the preparation of the Cargo Securing Manual.

III. CIC Questionnaire

The questionnaire has 10 main items. Q6 and Q10a are for information only — a “No” answer does not require a deficiency. All other items marked with an asterisk (*) are high-risk detention points; for each, the key inspection points and the consequences of non-compliance are described below.

Q1. Is this CIC applicable to the ship? (information only)

Determines only whether the ship is carrying cargo transport units. If there are no containers or cargo units on board, the remaining questions are not applicable.

Q2a*. Is there a flag-approved, ship-specific Cargo Securing Manual (CSM) on board?

Inspection focus: the manual must be the latest revision, matched to the ship’s securing equipment and cargo spaces, fully covering MSC.1/Circ.1353/Rev.2, and include lashing instructions for all loading scenarios — including high-cube and non-standard container types.

Common deficiencies: out-of-date manual, mismatch with actual equipment, not updated after ship modification, missing MSL/SWL parameters. Absence of an effective manual may be considered a detention deficiency.

Q2b*. Does the CSM provide clear lashing guidance for all stowage situations on board?

A manual that only provides example situations and cannot be matched 1:1 to every loading scenario does not in itself constitute a deficiency. However, if the manual lacks lashing requirements for the ship’s normal cargo types or fails to cover on-deck/under-deck stowage plans, a deficiency should be raised.

Q3*. Are deck officers familiar with the CSM's limits on stack weight, tier weight and deck loading?

Inspection focus: the PSCO will ask officers about container stack weight, vertical weight distribution, the maximum loads on hatch covers and tank tops, and the stack-height limits for high-cube containers. Officers must be able to explain wind-heeling moments and the increased windage created by taller stacks. They must also understand the legal status of the loading computer vs. the CSM — the lashing module of the loading computer is only a reference; the CSM is the binding statutory document. A serious lack of familiarity may be detainable.

Q4*. Is cargo stowage and lashing strictly in compliance with the CSM throughout the voyage?

Inspection focus: stack total weight not exceeded; upper-tier containers lighter than lower-tier; the stowage and lashing plan consistent with the manual; use of twist locks and lashing rods of the type specified in the manual. The PSCO may review previous voyage records; repeated non-compliance will attract heavier penalties. Examples of non-compliance: exceeding stack weight, reversing the weight sequence, using cones in place of twist locks, lashing angles exceeding CSS Code limits. May require re-stowage; refusal to rectify may lead to detention.

Q5*. Does the stowage plan record each container's Verified Gross Mass (VGM)?

VGM data must be provided by the terminal before loading. Containers without VGM must not be loaded. The stowage plan and cargo plan must record VGM. Missing VGM invalidates stability and lashing-load calculations, making stack collapse highly likely in heavy weather. If containers without VGM are found on board, cargo operations must be stopped immediately until documentation is provided; serious cases may be detainable.

Q6. Does the ship have a Cargo Safe Access Plan (CSAP)? (information only)

Applies to container ships with keel laid on or after 1 January 2015. Inspectors will check whether a cargo access plan exists and has been provided to stevedores and crew. Lack of a CSAP is recorded as information only and does not by itself generate a deficiency.

Q7*. Are the quantity, type and spares of portable securing equipment sufficient per the CSM?

Equipment on board must be identical in specification and brand to the manual. Sufficient spares must be carried to cover wear and damage. All four corners of four-tier stacks must be secured with twist locks; simplified securing is not permitted. Insufficient twist locks or rods, missing spares, and mixing different lock types are all deficiencies. Generally requires suspension of cargo operations to top up; failure to rectify within the deadline may be detainable.

Q8*. Are fixed and portable securing devices in good condition, suitable for the ship, and maintained in accordance with the manual?

The on-site check focuses on portable devices: twist locks free from cracks, deformation or wear beyond manufacturer limits; lashing-rod threads intact; turnbuckles with full locking devices; chains free from broken links; wire ropes with no more than 10% broken strands; deck sockets, D-rings and hatch-cover bases free from severe corrosion, deformation or weld cracking. Repaired bases must meet original manufacturer standards. On the management side, equipment maintenance logs should be in place and test certificates kept on board; damaged equipment must be tagged, quarantined and not reused; maintenance procedures should be written into the CSM. Extensive equipment damage may be detainable.

Q9*. Does the cargo stack height meet SOLAS V/22 bridge visibility requirements?

The view of the sea surface from the conning position must not be obscured by more than two ship lengths or 500 m (whichever is less); the blind arc created by cargo must not exceed 10°. Excessively high stacks of high-cube containers increase windage and roll. Inspection focus: the stowage plan should record the maximum permitted stack height; actual loading must not exceed the visibility limit. Non-compliance requires re-stowage; refusal to rectify may be detainable.

**Q10a. Does the SMS include procedures for preventing cargo loss in heavy weather?
(information only)**

Inspectors will check whether the SMS includes a heavy-weather lashing checklist. Records only whether such a document exists; does not by itself generate a deficiency.

Q10b. Are the heavy-weather cargo-loss prevention procedures being implemented?

Inspection focus: deck logbook records of lashing checks and re-tightening before and after heavy weather. Failure to re-check lashing within 24 hours of departure or after heavy weather is a typical deficiency. A deficiency may be raised; generally not directly detainable.

IV. Recommendations

Cargo shifting into the bulkhead or hatch cover can cause local structural deformation or damage. Container stack collapse and loss overboard poses not only a navigational hazard but also a risk of marine pollution. Misdeclared VGM or overloading undermines stability and significantly increases the risk of capsize in heavy weather. Excessively high stacks of high-cube containers increase wind-heeling moment, aggravating roll, which in turn raises forces on securing equipment and the probability of system failure. Damaged or deteriorated lashing gear that suddenly fails under load can cause serious or even fatal injury to deck workers. As shipboard and shore-side safety management personnel, please focus on the following:

1. Documentation

- Verify the CSM is the latest version approved by the Flag/Class; remove obsolete manuals on board; add sections on high-cube and on-deck cargo lashing.
- Keep a full set of securing-equipment test certificates and maintenance logs; damaged-equipment disposal records must be complete and traceable.
- Standardise voyage documents — each voyage's stowage plan must record VGM, stack weight and tier weight; pre-departure lashing check sheets must be signed by the watch officer and filed; the deck logbook must record pre-voyage and post-heavy-weather lashing checks in detail.
- Improve the SMS heavy-weather cargo protection procedure, equip it with dedicated checklists, and train crew accordingly.
- For ships with keel laid after 2015, properly retain the Cargo Safe Access Plan (CSAP).

2. Equipment Maintenance

- Take stock of all portable lashing equipment; replenish same-type spare twist locks, lashing rods and turnbuckles; do not mix devices of different specifications.
- Screen the whole ship for damaged, deformed, severely corroded or broken-strand equipment; quarantine and label as scrap; do not mix in service.
- Inspect deck sockets, D-rings, hatch-cover container bases, guide rails and other fixed securing points; arrange shipyard repair for weld cracks or severe corrosion.
- All equipment MSL markings must be clear and legible, not worn.

3. Stowage Control

- Require the terminal to provide VGM for all containers before loading; refuse to load containers without VGM.
- Place the heavy ones at the bottom; never exceed the CSM's permissible stack weight.
- Control stack height; verify bridge visibility; concentrate high-cube containers without exceeding the blind-arc limit.
- Lashing arrangements must fully match the CSM drawings; lashing angles must comply with the CSS Code; do not simplify lashing based on experience.
- Conduct full checks and re-tighten all securing equipment before departure, within 24 hours of departure, and before and after heavy weather; record each check.

4. Crew Training

- Provide dedicated training for officers, covering: familiarisation with stack weight, tier weight, deck loads and stack-height limits; the legal status of the loading computer vs. the CSM; ability to demonstrate lashing arrangements for the relevant container types on site.
- Practical deck drills: twist-lock installation; lashing-rod tensioning; heavy-weather re-check procedures; identification and disposal of damaged equipment.
- Keep training records on file to respond to PSC on-site questions.

This article is for Members' reference only. For specific advice, please contact Managers of the Association.