

Hazards Involved in Container Lashing

The lashing of containers aboard vessels is dangerous work. Activities involve the lifting and maneuvering of heavy gear in tight spaces with low headroom and work from elevated locations. Work is also often performed around moving equipment, in areas with poor lighting, and during unfavorable weather conditions. As a result, there is an increased risk of potential injury from slips, trips, and falls, being struck and/or crushed by equipment or falling objects, and improper handling of gear.

Your employer is responsible for providing you with the appropriate tools, training, and protective equipment to safely perform your assigned duties. For further detail on employer responsibilities under the OSHA Marine Terminal and Longshoring Standards see the Fact Sheet on [Protecting Workers during Lashing Operations \(Publication 4182\)](#).



To protect yourself and others during lashing operations:

- Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment for the task, such as hard hats, reflective safety vests, safety shoes, and gloves. When possible, use hard hats with chin straps.
- Use fall protection when appropriate and necessary. Fall protection should be worn when exposed to a fall hazard, such as going aloft to unlock twist locks, and when lashing the last container tier on the inshore or offshore side of the vessel, where fall protection railings should be in place.
- Maintain a safe distance from a working crane. A good rule of thumb is to ensure a separation of 3 to 5 TEU (60 – 100 feet) between you and the crane.
- Use appropriately sized tools or equipment to prevent standing on rails, overreaching or overextending (e.g., lashing gear that is the proper type, length, and diameter for the job).
- Work in teams of two to ensure better control of rods and turnbuckles.

- Do not throw gear, lashing poles, or unlocking poles.
- Ensure proper tension, tools and technique when breaking or tightening turnbuckles.
- Never leave lashing bars hanging unattended and, if damaged, remove them from service.
- Remove unsecured loose cones, lashing rods, and turnbuckles prior to hoisting hatch covers.
- Properly use ladders, including maintaining three points of contact while ascending and descending.
- Close lashing bridge access hatches when working on elevated lashing bridges.
- Keep deck surfaces and lashing bridges free of lashing rods, debris, and equipment.
- Only use lashing gear and cones that are maintained in proper working order.
- Use caution and maintain control when passing lashing gear and bars.
- Inform management of unsafe conditions, such as inadequate illumination, slip, trip, or fall hazards, damaged lashing gear, holes or openings in walking and working surfaces, as well as any missing or broken railings.
- Report all injuries and illness, regardless of severity, and encourage others to do the same.

