



Container Reference Sheet

Not sure which containers will help your supply chain run smoothly? This quick overview will help you narrow down the best type of ocean shipping containers for your needs.

Container Types

Standard Container

Standard containers have rigid walls, roof, and floor.

Standard sizes: **20' x 8' x 8'6", 38 CBM**
 40' x 8' x 8'6", 68 CBM
 40' x 8' x 9'6"*, 86 CBM

Best for: Most shipping needs; dry cargoes in boxes, bales, bags, and pallets

Open or closed: Completely enclosed with one end-wall door

Hardtop Container

Hardtop containers are made with steel rooftops.

Standard sizes: **20' x 8' x 8'6", 38 CBM**
 40' x 8' x 8'6", 68 CBM
 40' x 8' x 9'6"*, 86 CBM

Best for: Heavier cargo and taller items

Open or closed: Removable roofs for crane loads; open door header on ends

Flatrack Container

These stackable containers have a steel frame and strong wood floors.

Standard sizes: **20' x 8' x 8'6", 38 CBM**
 40' x 8' x 8'6", 68 CBM
 40' x 8' x 9'6"*, 86 CBM

Best for: Bulky cargo that's over-sized (in width or length)

Open or closed: No sidewalls, fixed or collapsible end walls

Platform Container

This flat container is made from a wooden floor and steel frame.

Standard sizes: **20' x 8' x 8'6", 38 CBM**
 40' x 8' x 8'6", 68 CBM

Best for: Extremely heavy and oversized loads

Open or closed: Floor structure without walls

* denotes a High Cube, or HC.

Measurements also include CBM, or cubic meter.

This CBM is measured by technical capacity, the capacity if every inch of the container were filled with liquid

Open Top Container

Open top containers have a flexible, removable tarpaulin roof.

Standard sizes: **20' x 8' x 8'6", 38 CBM**
 40' x 8' x 8'6", 68 CBM
 40' x 8' x 9'6"*, 86 CBM

Best for: Overheight, heavy, or bulky cargo

Open or closed: Movable/removable roof and bows, door header and end walls that swing out

Reefer Container

Reefer containers are refrigerated and often made of polyurethane foam for insulation.

Standard sizes: **20' x 8' x 8'6", 38 CBM**
 40' x 8' x 8'6", 68 CBM
 40' x 8' x 9'6"*, 86 CBM

Best for: Temperature-sensitive and perishable goods

Open or closed: Closed, with adjustable ventilation

Insulated Container

Insulated containers are also refrigerated but have vessels or a clip-on unit to control temperature.

Standard sizes: **20' x 8' x 8'6", 38 CBM**
 40' x 8' x 8'6", 68 CBM

Best for: Temperature-sensitive goods that remain below freezing

Open or closed: Closed

Platform Container

This flat container is made from a wooden floor and steel frame.

Standard sizes: **20' x 8' x 8'6", 38 CBM**

Best for: Constant ventilation in various weather conditions

Open or closed: Closed with openings in top and bottom longitudinal rails



A Quick Note on FCL and LCL Loads

A full container load, or FCL, is a shipment that takes up the entire container. A less than container load, or LCL, takes up less than a full container space.

Why does it matter? When your team picks up ocean cargo from a terminal, FCL and LCL loads have different payment and release requirements. You can learn more [here](#).