

The Bontrade Guide to Shipping Containers

First Edition

Everything You Need to Know About Buying, Shipping and Using ISO Containers

Welcome

Every day millions of products travel the world inside standardized shipping containers. This guide introduces the history of containerization, explains the most common ISO container types, and provides practical advice for importers, exporters, and businesses throughout the Caribbean. It is intended as the first volume in Bontrade's educational logistics series.

Chapter 1 – The Steel Box That Changed the World

Before containerization, cargo was loaded piece by piece onto ships, making ocean transport slow, expensive, and vulnerable to damage and theft. In 1956, Malcom McLean demonstrated that standardized containers could move seamlessly between truck, rail, and ship, revolutionizing global trade. Today, over 90% of manufactured goods move in containers.

Chapter 2 – Meet the Container Family

Container	ISO	Typical Use
20' Dry	22G1	Heavy cargo, machinery, pallets
40' Dry	42G1	Retail goods, furniture
40' High Cube	45G1	Household goods, lightweight cargo
Reefer	RF	Perishable products
Open Top	22U1 / 42U1	Top-loaded machinery
Flat Rack	22P3 / 42P3	Oversized equipment
Tank	20T6	Liquids and chemicals

Chapter 3 – Choosing the Right Container

Choose a 20-foot container for dense cargo, a 40-foot or High Cube for volume, a reefer for temperature-sensitive goods, and specialized equipment such as flat racks or open tops for oversized loads. Selecting the correct container reduces costs and minimizes cargo risk.

Chapter 4 – New vs. Used

One-trip containers offer the best cosmetic condition. Cargo Worthy containers are certified for international shipping. Wind and Water Tight containers are ideal for storage. Understanding container grades helps buyers balance budget and intended use.

Inspection Checklist

- Inspect doors and locking bars.
- Look for rust, holes, or roof damage.
- Check the floor for rot or contamination.

- Verify the CSC plate if shipping internationally.
- Inspect door seals for water tightness.

Why Bontrade?

Bontrade combines international freight forwarding, customs brokerage, and container sales with practical logistics knowledge. Our goal is to help customers choose the right equipment—not simply sell a container.

Future Editions: Incoterms Explained • Ocean Freight Made Simple • Caribbean Importer's Handbook • Buying Your First Shipping Container