



LOSS PREVENTION CIRCULAR · JUNE 2026

Prevention of Damage in the Carriage of Glass Cargoes

• SUBJECT · GLASS CARGO

Of late, an increase has been observed in cargo damage occurring on board vessels carrying glass cargoes (float / sheet glass, plate glass). Glass is by its nature a fragile and delicate cargo; in the event of inadequate packing, improper stowage or insufficient lashing it may quickly give rise to high-value claims. This circular has been prepared to reduce the risk of breakage in glass shipments and to strengthen our Members' legal position in the event of damage.

01 Nature of the Risk

Glass is generally carried upright, in sturdy timber cases / crates or on A-frame (trestle) type carriers. The principal practical causes of breakage are inadequate packing (the case bending, insufficient internal securing), improper stowage (stowing the glass flat, point loading, insufficient use of dunnage), unsuitable or unchecked lashing, and the cargo moving in heavy weather. Most of these factors can be prevented through simple checks carried out before and during loading.

02 Before Loading

The packing of the glass cargo should be carefully inspected before loading. The cases are expected to be strong enough not to bend during handling and slinging; this is particularly critical for large sheets, where the case must be adequately reinforced. For cases moved by forklift, it is preferable that the lower part be supported with hardwood battens so that the forks do not damage the case and its contents. The glass should be firmly secured within the case with wood wool, polystyrene or similar filling material so that it cannot move; this filling should be such that it will not over-compress in the event of a sudden impact or fall.

It should be verified that the glass is packed on end (upright) within the case and that large sheets are handled and slung by their edges. Consignments whose packing is found to be inadequate, damaged or damp should either be refused, or the condition recorded photographically and the relevant clauses inserted on the bill of lading or the mate's receipt. For valuable and high-volume glass consignments, arranging an independent pre-loading survey wherever possible and recording the cargo, its packing and the tally provides strong protection.

03 Stowage

Glass must always be stowed upright and must under no circumstances be left lying flat; flat stowage, owing to the weight bearing down upon it, is among the most frequent causes of breakage. The weight on the tank top should be evenly distributed, the load should not be concentrated at particular points beneath pads / skids (point loading should be avoided) and, where necessary, the load should be supported so as to be spread over the surface. Sufficient dunnage and separation should be used between consignments and between the cargo and the ship's structure to prevent contact and chafing.

In tiered stowage, heavy cases should not be placed on top of lighter ones, and stack height and load limits should not be exceeded. Any voids arising during stowage should be properly chocked to prevent the cargo from working during the voyage. The entire stowage arrangement should be planned in accordance with the vessel's approved Cargo Securing Manual (CSM). Where glass is to be carried on deck, additional protection and a more robust securing arrangement should be provided owing to exposure to sea, spray and weather conditions.

04 Lashing and Monitoring During the Voyage

The lashing arrangement should be of sufficient strength for the weight and characteristics of the cargo and for the sea conditions that may reasonably be expected during the voyage, and should meet the CSM criteria. To this end, lashing equipment of sufficient quantity, of a suitable type and in sound condition should be used; the cargo should be secured against both transverse and longitudinal shifting and supported with chocks / dunnage. Lashings should be checked periodically throughout the voyage, any that have slackened re-tightened in good time, and the checks recorded in the log / records. Where heavy weather is anticipated, additional measures, including route and speed management, should be considered.

KEY PRINCIPLE

If the cargo has not been stowed and secured in a manner sufficient to withstand the weather and sea conditions reasonably anticipated during the voyage, the occurrence of heavy weather alone cannot be relied upon as a defence by insurers. Under such circumstances, attributing the damage to "perils of the sea" becomes considerably more challenging.

05 Documentation and Clausing

In glass shipments, documentation is as important as the breakage itself. During loading, the packing and apparent condition should be checked; non-conformities should be recorded photographically and the necessary clauses inserted in good time on the mate's receipt and the bill of lading. Before a clean bill of lading is issued, the apparent condition of the cargo should be confirmed.

06 Contractual Measures

In charter party arrangements, the transfer of responsibility for stowage / loading to cargo interests (FIOSST type clauses) and protections in respect of insufficiency of packing should be considered.

CASE LAW · EEMS SOLAR (2013)

M/V EEMS SOLAR illustrates the effect of such clauses: charter party terms transferring responsibility for stowage to cargo interests were held to have been validly incorporated into the bill of lading, the owner was not held liable for the damage arising from improper stowage (the absence of locking coils), and in this respect the decision took the Jordan II line of authority further still.

That said, this protection is strictly dependent on the contractual wording; the vessel's seaworthiness as regards lashing equipment (Article III Rule 1 of the Hague Rules) and **the master's duty to intervene where safety so requires cannot be transferred**. Accordingly, while suitable contractual clauses are important, the principal protection is still afforded by effective supervision of stowage, adequate securing equipment and proper documentation. In selecting counterparties, working with "traceable and responsive" charterers is likewise an important risk-mitigation factor in any potential recourse process.

CHECKLIST Pre-Loading Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Is the packing / case sound and resistant to bending? Is the internal securing (wood wool / polystyrene) adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/> Is the cargo upright? (Absolutely no flat stowage.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there any point loading? Is the weight evenly distributed and the dunnage adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/> Has the stowage been planned in accordance with the CSM?
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the lashing of sufficient strength and CSM-compliant? Is there a plan for checks during the voyage?	<input type="checkbox"/> Has the condition of the packing / cargo been photographed?
<input type="checkbox"/> Have non-conformities been clausured on the mate's receipt and the bill of lading?	<input type="checkbox"/> Are stowage-responsibility / insufficiency-of-packing protections present in the CP?
<input type="checkbox"/> Is a pre-loading survey required? (For valuable / high-volume consignments.)	