CONTAINER FIRE

	ACTION (NOT NECESSARILY IN ORDER)
☐	Sound the general alarm.
☐	Muster crew and passengers.
☐	If the container is in the hold; assess if it is safe to enter; if so, a two man team to enter with protective gear, S.C.B.A. and hoseline. Beware of toxic fumes and test the atmosphere.
☐	Assess extent and source of fire.
☐	Commence cooling the container with water spray. Boundary cool adjacent containers and containers above and below. If the containers are in a hold pump the bilges to remove the water.
☐	Broadcast URGENCY message to ships in the vicinity and call for assistance if vessel in grave or imminent danger. Advise the company of the situation.
☐	Check contents of container and determine method of attack.
☐	If direct attack possible drill, punch or chisel a small hole (25mm) into the side of the container and a. Flood container with CO_2 provided no oxidising agent present by: • fitting a Conado container fire fighting applicator and connecting a hose to the CO_2 cylinder, and flood the container with CO_2; or • initially discharging at least 6 portable 6.8kg CO_2 extinguishers into the container. The opening must then be plugged and additional CO_2 discharged hourly until the fire is out. b. Flooding container with a hose line
☐	If a direct attack is not possible in the hold or unable to contain the fire the hold must be sealed and flooded with CO_2. Water spray boundary cooling to be applied to the decks, hatch covers/coamings and ships side. Check adjacent holds for heat build up and cool bulkheads with water spray if possible (pump the bilges) **WARNING – After release of CO_2 the oxygen content of adjacent holds may be deficient due to leaks. Test the atmosphere and ensure it is safe for entry. If in any doubt wear S.C.B.A.**
☐	Do not open the hold or container until vessel is safely in port and shore fire brigade in attendance. Best if container discharged to shore.

	CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR CONTAINER FIRE
1.	Container fires are usually caused by the incorrect packing of hazardous cargo within the container or the container being exposed to a heat source such as the engineroom bulkhead or heated fuel tanks. Oxidising agents are particularly hazardous and may ignite if spilt onto flammable material through incorrect packing or exposed to a heat source. Some oxidising agents such as Calcium Hypochlorite (carriage banned on Company vessels) require very little heat to ignite and the temperature within a container exposed to direct sunlight may be enough to ignite it.
2.	Large container fires in ships holds have caused extensive structural damage and have been known to cause total constructive loss of the vessel.
3.	Every effort must be made to confine the fire to the container and prevent its spread. Cooling the container with water spray is the most effective way of doing this. Containers stowed adjacent to the burning container or above or below it should also be cooled with water spray.
4.	Be careful when entering holds/compartments because toxic fumes may be present and oxygen content too low. Always test the atmosphere and determine that it is safe for entry. If in any doubt wear protective gear and S.C.B.A.
5.	It is important to establish what cargo is packed in the burning container in order to determine the best method of attack. If oxidising agents are present then CO2 will be ineffective and copious quantities of water may be more suitable.
6.	If the container is assessable then an attempt should be made to extinguish the fire within by drilling, punching or chiselling a small hole into it and flooding it with CO2 or water. Portable CO2 fire extinguishers can be used as an alternative to Conado container fire fighting equipment.
7.	If the container is not accessible the hold should be sealed and flooded with CO2. The fire may spread to the adjacent containers because CO2 will not cool them and prevent heat transfer, and each container will contain some air to support combustion. If the hold is kept tightly sealed and boundary cooling applied then the CO2 should contain the fire to the hold and prevent any flare up.
8.	Once CO2 is discharged, leakage from the fire hold may make adjacent holds untenable without breathing apparatus. The oxygen content of these holds must be checked continually to ensure the safety of crewmen performing monitoring tasks.
9.	Even if you think the fire is extinguished never open the hatches, ventilate the hold or open the fire damaged containers until the vessel is safely in port and shore side fire fighting units are available. Fire damaged containers should be discharged ashore and not opened on board.
10.	Keep the Company fully advised and regularly up dated on the situation. The Company will assist with advice and arrangements for assistance.
11.	Consideration should be given to deviating to the closest suitable port of refuge that can provide the necessary fire fighting support.
12.	The container identification numbers may be removed or become unreadable through fire or heat damage and this will make identification difficult and time consuming. The delay will upset cargo receivers who will be anxious about details of their cargo. If a General Average is declared the release of the undamaged cargo may be delayed until damaged cargo has been positively identified and valued. If possible the stowage position should be painted on the damaged containers to enable the authorities to identify them from the stowage plan.