



## Container: placing seals

### ● Placing the seal is a responsibility

The risk of theft varies according to the type of merchandise, shipping method, ports of loading and unloading and destinations. Thieves are very organized and are able to open containers, make off with all or part of their contents and close them again without any visible sign of break-in, even when containers have been previously fitted with seals.

- **Has containerization reduced the risk of theft?** Yes, definitely. This, however, does not mean that those involved in shipping can be any less vigilant at every stage in the shipping process.
- **Theft or missing items?** It is important not to rush to any conclusions (for example, assuming that the items were missing at the time of stuffing), since experience tells us that thieves can show considerable cunning and intelligence in ensuring the break-in remains invisible.

Although **seals are not designed to lock the container**, they are an excellent way of showing where and when a container has been unlawfully opened. It is, therefore, vital that the seal is thoroughly checked each time liability is transferred.

Use of seals is only effective if certain precautions are taken and strict checks carried out:



## Choice of seal

As a result of competition, seal manufacturers have increased the number of seals available in an effort to improve anti-theft security.

Model	Comment	Reliability
<p><b>1 «Lead”-type seal</b></p> 	<p>No numbering, easy to open and close. Many customs authorities still use them.</p>	<p><b>None</b></p>
<p><b>2 Strap seal</b></p> 	<p>Sealed using plastic or metal, sometimes numbered, often too fragile and easy to tamper with. Generally used to show that the container has been inspected (customs, emptied and cleaned, etc.).</p>	<p><b>Low</b></p>
<p><b>3 Seals using cable or padlock</b></p> 	<p>Difficult to break. Choose a model that is numbered.</p>	<p><b>Good</b></p>
<p><b>4 Bolt seal</b></p> 	<p>High security seal. Very difficult to break. A bolt cutter is needed to “open” the seal.</p>	<p><b>Very good</b></p>
<p><b>5 Fork seal</b></p> 	<p>This high security seal is placed over the door bars. The fork and the bolt seal must be numbered.</p>	<p><b>Excellent</b></p>
<p><b>6 Electronic fork seal</b></p> 	<p>Security is heightened by an electronic device which memorizes all the identification configurations and indelibly records any attempts at break-in.</p>	<p><b>Excellent</b></p>

## Positioning of seal

- On the handle:** The handle is the traditional position for most models of seal. However, it has been found that it is possible to open and close the container without touching the seals by removing the rivets between the bar and the handles.



In relation to the bolt-type seal: position the top of the cap pointing upwards. This will make it more difficult for plunderers, who fill it with a liquid (acid or liquid nitrogen) so that they can open and close the seal invisibly.

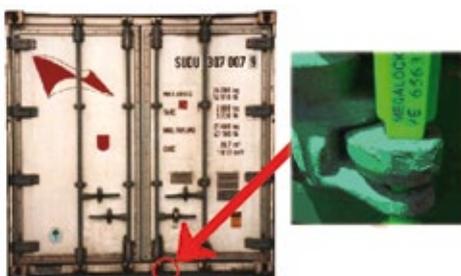


- On the bars:** The bars are the ideal position for which the fork seal was designed. It becomes extremely difficult to open the doors without it being obvious. This device can also be added to/improved using a container lock and by adding a seal.



Bar lock

- On the latch:** One of the closing latches at the bottom of the container is fitted with an eye especially designed for holding a seal. This position makes it very difficult to open the doors without breaking the seal. However, in this position the seal is more exposed to impacts and the risk of being accidentally damaged.



## The procedure

- 1 Give just one trustworthy person responsibility for the registration (seal file/log-book), fitting and supervision of all the seals.
- 2 This person must fill out the seal file, including all necessary information. For example:
  - > Place, date and time the seals were fitted
  - > Model, make, number and colour of the seal: this detail is important as thieves may substitute a seal for another of the same type with the same serial number
  - > Container number
  - > Recipient (name and place) responsible for opening the container
  - > Shipping references
  - > Name and signature of the person who placed the seals
- 3 The above information must be recorded on the shipping documents prior to departure: Freight bill, invoice, etc.
- 4 The seal may then be placed. If provided by the driver, the model, make, number and colour of the seal will be carefully checked. The person responsible (loader) must place the seal personally and check it is secure by pulling on it hard (do not delegate this security procedure, especially not to the driver).
- 5 At the destination, before breaking the seal, carefully check that the model, make, number and colour of the seal match to indicate any evidence of a break-in.  
Keep the seal once it has been broken, it will help the inquiry in the event of fraud.
- 6 It is recommended that the container inventory be carried out as soon as possible to check the load is complete. If the container needs to be stored, carry out the inventory and place the new seals for storage (appropriate procedures and file/log-book).

**A seal has never stopped a thief  
it is not a lock!**