

# RISK ALERT

## Mitigating Risks of Extreme Overwidth Cargo on Flatracks

As part of our mission, National Cargo Bureau (NCB) conducts thousands of surveys relating to the stowage and securing of cargoes on flatracks, generally on behalf of ocean carriers, each year.

NCB also provides guidance and advice to shippers and packers intending to transport such cargoes by sea.

Of late, we have seen an increasing number of cargoes that may be considered inappropriate for carriage on a flatrack, primarily due to their extreme width.



The flatrack CTU has a width of 8 feet (2.44 m). Increasingly, NCB surveyors are seeing cargoes with width approaching 20 feet (6.10 m) placed onto flatracks and presented for inspection.

**Extreme overwidth cargoes on flatracks can create major problems for securing** due to limited number of, and access to lashing points, particularly for heavy cargoes, compounded by an inability to properly secure against tipping. This is notably relevant as these flatracks cannot be overstowed and are, therefore, subjected to stowage on the top of container stacks, thus potentially exposed on board to the greatest forces due to ship motions, principally rolling. This also means that these flatracks are likely to be inaccessible. In the event of any lashing failure or cargo shift, there may be no opportunity to add additional lashings and progressive failure may occur, **resulting in significant risks to personnel, ship, cargo, and the environment.**

Additionally, **extreme overwidth cargo may result in much of the cargo piece being unsupported where it extends beyond the width of the flatrack.** This can be damaging to the cargo as the unsupported width may sag under handling, vibration, or other motions experienced during transit.

Consequently, to minimize this risk, **NCB recommends that cargo exceeding 12 feet (3.66 m) in width undergo detailed evaluation, in consultation with the ocean carrier, to determine suitability.** This evaluation may include cargo configuration, construction and dimensions, potential sensitivity to acceleration forces, type of packaging, as well as placement and accessibility of cargo securing points in correlation to width. Cargoes not suitable for proper securing or bedding on a single flatrack may be loaded as break-bulk onto a bed of flatracks or platforms, utilizing the additional securing points provided, allowing for optimal lashing leads and ensuring the cargo is fully supported.

For further details or inquiries concerning stowage and securing of cargoes on flatracks, please contact us at [Consultancy@NCB.org](mailto:Consultancy@NCB.org).

Additional information can also be found and accessed free of charge at the following links:

[Code of Practice for Packing Cargo Transport Units](#)

[IMO Circular 1498 - Informative Material that supplements the CTU Code](#)

[www.containerhandbuch.de](http://www.containerhandbuch.de)



### **About NCB:**

Since its inception in 1952, National Cargo Bureau (NCB) has been singularly committed to the safety of life and cargo at sea. NCB came into existence because of the need to prevent maritime disasters brought about by the shipment of dangerous goods. NCB operates on a global basis helping to enhance safety and ensure compliance with regulations through inspection and surveying activities predominantly relating to dangerous goods, the stability of ships carrying bulk cargoes, and proper stowage and securing of cargo for sea. In 2018, NCB acquired Exis Technologies (now rebranded as NCB Hazcheck), a software company aligned with the corporate mission, ensuring safety and compliance in the global transportation of dangerous goods. Together we have an established global reach; physically and digitally.