

# Unstuffing & Detention Fees

There are many small shippers that use containers and when it comes to stuffing and unstuffing the operation can be very simple. In the following video, we have a 40ft high cube general purpose container being unstuffed, at a small independent furniture retailer's warehouse in the UK which receives around 12 container loads of furniture per year.



Within one minute of the truck arriving at the warehouse the container seal is broken and the doors are opened to reveal boxes containing pre-assembled or flat packed furniture. There is little consistency in the shape, size or weight of the boxes, but they have been carefully stowed by the exporter to ensure as many items as possible fit into the container. Unsuitable for palletisation each box must then be manually unloaded. The only equipment used for unloading is a ladder, a stack of old pallets, a steel frame with rollers and a hand pallet truck. We also have four workers - two in the container and two transferring the cargo into the warehouse.

The consignee, the retailer, contracted directly with the shipping line for the door-to-door service from the consignor's factory in Vietnam to the retailer's warehouse in the UK. Under the shipping line's freight contract with the retailer, 3 hours is given at the final destination for the container to be unstuffed. If the unstuffing takes longer than this, then an additional fee for each hour the driver, truck and container is detained is charged. This fee is known as a detention charge (although other terms may be used).

The whole process from the arrival to departure of the truck took 2 hours and 15 minutes so no detention fee was incurred on this occasion. On leaving the warehouse the now empty container is taken back to the container terminal where it was imported. Here its condition is checked and it is stored until its next movement is known.

Back at the warehouse each individual furniture item is checked - many of the items are ready for immediate delivery to customers who had pre-ordered the items before the container was shipped. If any of the pre-ordered items had been damaged during their shipment or handling this would have been a disaster for the retailer as their customers would have to wait a further 8 weeks for a replacement.

## Key Terms

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- |                 |                             |              |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| • Consignee     | • General purpose container | • Seal       |
| • Consignor     | • High cube containers      | • Stuffing   |
| • Detention fee | • Loading bay               | • Unstuffing |
| • Door-to-door  |                             |              |
| • Free period   |                             |              |

## Glossary

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### Consignee

The receiver of goods transported by a carrier\*

### Consignor

The sender of goods of goods transported by a carrier\*

**Detention fee**

A per day cost charged to a shipper for delaying the return of an empty container beyond an agreed free period

**Door-to-door**

Where a transport company is responsible for the entire transport movement from origin to final destination

**Free period**

Agreed period of time that equipment (including a container) may be retained or an item (including a container) may be stored without incurring a detention or demurrage fee

**General purpose container**

Totally enclosed container with door openings - as it is very versatile it is the most common type of container seen in operation

**High cube containers**

Containers that are 9ft 6in high compared to the traditional 8ft or 8ft 6in high - introduced in 1980s to give more volume for light bulky cargo

**Loading bay**

Area where trucks or railway wagons are loaded and unloaded – commonly found in commercial and industrial buildings, especially warehouses

**Seal**

Used to ensure the integrity of a shipment by highlighting any unauthorised entry into the container

**Stuffing**

The act of loading cargo into a container

**Unstuffing**

The act of unloading cargo from a container