The goal of the World Shipping Council (WSC) is to provide a coordinated voice for the liner shipping industry. The WSC and its member companies partner with governments and other stakeholders to collaborate on actionable solutions for some of the world’s most challenging transportation problems. To learn more about the World Shipping Council and the international liner shipping industry, please visit: www.worldshipping.org

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LINER SHIPPING

The liner shipping industry transports goods by means of high-capacity, ocean-going ships that transit regular routes on fixed schedules. The World Shipping Council's member companies operate approximately 90 percent of the global liner ship capacity, providing approximately 400 regularly scheduled services, most of which sail weekly, linking the continents of the world. Collectively, these liner services, which are comprised primarily of containerships and roll-on/roll-off ships, transport about 60 percent of global seaborne trade or more than US $4 trillion worth of goods annually. The cost of transporting goods from factories to markets on these liner services is typically one percent or less of the retail price of those goods.

SAFE

Container shipping became so popular so quickly in large part because it provides safe and efficient door-to-door transportation of goods. Packaged products are loaded into a container at origin where the container is then sealed. The products remain untouched inside the sealed container until they arrive at their destination, often thousands of miles away.

Containers utilized by the liner shipping industry are constructed according to the International Convention for Safe Containers. These containers also meet more stringent standards regarding structural integrity and container strength, which are developed by the industry through the International Organization for Standardization.

Proper cargo loading and stowage of containers is very important to the safety of the ship and its crew, to shore-based workers and equipment, and to the environment. The liner shipping industry supports mandatory international requirements that the actual weight of each loaded container be verified and provided to the vessel’s operators prior to loading aboard a ship or as to improve the safety of ships' operations. Additionally, the World Shipping Council co-authored “Safe Transport of Containers by Sea,” which provides guidelines to all parties in the supply chain regarding the safe loading and handling of ocean containers.

Liner shipping companies have also implemented a number of programs to insure the safety of their seafarers. In addition to extensive and routine training programs for workers, these companies have strict reporting requirements for all accidents so that the incidents can be investigated and avoided in the future.

SECURE

Liner shipping companies have worked in close cooperation with international organizations like the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO), the European Commission, the United States and numerous other national governments to implement programs to protect the security of ships, cargo and crew as well as the citizens of all nations around the world.

The liner shipping industry has endorsed and helped governments develop a layered risk management approach to improve cargo security. Such an approach includes identification of potentially high-risk shipments through collection and analysis of information from appropriate sources in the supply chain before cargo is loaded aboard a vessel.

Each ship maintains a security plan that addresses issues ranging from the designation of a ship security officer to the detailed plans to be implemented if the ship comes under attack. The industry has worked with governments to combat piracy and employs security tactics recommended as best management practices in areas affected by piracy.

World Shipping Council member companies also participate in a number of voluntary security programs established by various governments to enhance the security of the supply chain. These programs, such as the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) and the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programs, require participants to implement security measures beyond those established by regulations, to monitor their own compliance with those measures as well as the compliance of their vendors, and to take corrective action where necessary.

SUSTAINABLE

Liner shipping is by far the most carbon-efficient means of transporting cargo around the world. The carbon footprint of a modern container ship ranges from 10-40 grams of CO₂ emitted per metric ton of freight per kilometer of transportation. By comparison, trains emit 20-150 grams, trucks emit 60-150 grams and aircraft emit 500-950 grams. These are conservative estimates. Other studies indicate an even wider variance in carbon emissions between ocean transport and the other modes.

Nevertheless, liner shipping companies are actively pursuing ways to further increase the carbon and fuel efficiency of the world fleet.

The World Shipping Council and its member companies are widely recognized as leaders in successfully advocating for the adoption of stringent international regulations to limit specific air emissions including oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and sulfur (SOx), particulate matter (PM), carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other emissions that could be harmful to the environment.

Liner shipping companies have detailed plans in place to prevent and respond to accidental fuel oil spills and employ measures to prevent the transfer of aquatic nuisance species in ships' ballast water and on hull surfaces. Strict procedures regarding the disposal of garbage and other waste have also been incorporated into companies’ standard operating procedures. Liner vessel operators also adhere to guidelines issued by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and national governments to help ships avoid areas frequented by especially vulnerable species and to otherwise protect marine life and its habitat.