Basic Rules for the Loading of Cargo in Containers

The information contained herein should be treated as a guide only.

Cargo Distribution within the Container

1. Cargo weight must be evenly spread over the largest possible floor area.
2. Centre of gravity of the cargo is to be as close as possible to the container centre and as low as possible. The higher is the centre of gravity the higher must be the wedging devices.
3. The cargo load units must support (be in contact with) each other with no large gaps in between and must be secured to the container (wedges, lashings, etc) so that they cannot move nor collapse. All containers are fitted with several lashing rings and bars.
4. If the cargo load units are not homogeneous the heaviest ones must be on floor level and the lighter ones on top (and liquid ones underneath solid ones).

Recommendations about Cargo Weight

5. The maximum gross mass/weight of the container (usually marked as « Max gross » on the container RHS door) must never be exceeded (there are also maximum limits related to different local inland transport regulations).

6. Cases of concentrated cargo load.

   As per rule 1. the cargo must lie over as many floor cross members as possible so that the weight distribution is as close as possible to the ideal one based on container max payload value and length. For instance the limit for a 20GP is about 5T per linear metre (based on max payload 28T, length 6 m).

> Another guideline is to consider that if/when cargo lays over about 50 % of the floor length its weight must not exceed 66 % of the container max payload (and so on, 66% of length for 75% of weight, 75% for 80%) but these indications may vary according to container types.

> Whenever necessary the cargo must be put on some additional supports / longitudinal members to comply with above recommendations.