

Shipping second-hand machinery carries hidden penalties for the unwary.

The machinery may contain hazardous materials.

Get the machinery surveyed before and during loading.

Clause the shipping documents to show ‘second-hand machinery’.

In case of difficulties, consult a senior manager or director, or your regular claims contact at your TT Club office. Further information can be obtained from the TT Club’s Regional Centres.



Further information, and additional copies, can be obtained from the TT Club's regional centres:

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Machinery Safety

Shipping second-hand machinery may seem like easy money, but it carries hidden penalties for the unwary.

Firstly there is the difficulty of loading and securing pieces of miscellaneous machinery safely in a container. When they were first manufactured, the suppliers probably prepared the machinery for shipment fixed to a solid timber base with massive bolts, with eyes and rings to secure it within the container. Now, many years later, the seller is just happy to have found a buyer for his old machine and is certainly not going to spend money on preparing it for transport. So fairly large items of machinery are often loaded into containers without any form of securing - and then other, smaller, items are put more or less haphazardly into the container too. Sometimes they fit snugly but usually they do not. Blocking and bracing, the use of dunnage to hold the load securely: that is all simply too much. Unsecured, loads like this can and will shift in transit and, when they do, they can pose considerable dangers to others - and it does not do the load itself much good either.

Then there is an ever-present danger that the machinery itself may contain hazardous materials, such as oil, hydraulic fluids, acids (for instance in batteries) and other substances, many of which may only be shipped if they are packed in accordance with the appropriate international regulations. If such liquids can leak they may contaminate container floors, or leak onto cargo in containers stowed underneath and, in certain circumstances can create a fire or explosion risk, which could put the crew or the ship in jeopardy. Accumulated grease, metal filings, swarf and other detritus, which has collected in and on the machine during its working life, can also create hazards.

The third problem can only be described as the gap of perception between what the seller is selling and what the buyer thinks he is buying. The seller is disposing of a machine which has been used for quite some time and which has

certainly seen better days. Over the years it has accumulated knocks and scratches, rust and dents, none of which really impair its function but which detract from its appearance. The buyer, although he knows he is buying a second-hand machine, somehow expects it to be in showroom condition. Suddenly the dents and scratches assume a major importance - and if the transport operator has not carefully cloused the Bill of Lading, he may find himself being held liable to make good all the wear and tear on the machine. You can only hope that the machine was in working order immediately before it was dismantled for shipment because you certainly cannot take responsibility for any internal defects - although the buyer may try to blame you if the machine does not work when it is delivered.

What can transport operators do to protect themselves? Business is business, even if it is the transport of second-hand machinery, so refusing to carry it is probably not an option. The simplest way of avoiding problems is to get an independent surveyor to inspect the machinery before and during the loading process. To take careful note of the condition of the items and - assuming the shipper is responsible for loading the container - to advise on proper methods of securing the cargo. It will cost money to have a surveyor in attendance, but this can be costed in to the price. It may be more expensive at first, but the savings will become apparent in the long run. Your local TT Club office or Network Partner will be able to put you in contact with a surveyor. When the loading has been finalised, do then clause the bill clearly showing who packed the container and also stating that the machinery is second-hand and that no responsibility is assumed for the state of the machine on discharge.