International Standard

ISO 6346

Freight containers — Coding, identification and marking

Conteneurs pour le transport de marchandises — Codage, identification et marquage

Fifth edition
2026-11

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Reference number
ISO 6346:2026(en)

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Published in Switzerland

ISO 6346:2026 • https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/iso/e51de6fa-1a49-4990-9f23-837e8f194f31/iso-6346-2026

Contents

Page

Foreword ... **iv**

1 Scope ... **1**

2 Normative references ... **2**

3 Terms and definitions ... **2**

4 Identification system and its associated marks ... **2**
4.1 Identification system ... 2
4.1.1 General ... 2
4.1.2 Owner code ... 2
4.1.3 Equipment category identifier ... 3
4.1.4 Serial number ... 3
4.1.5 Check digit ... 3
4.2 Identification marks ... 3

5 Size and type codes and their associated marks ... **3**
5.1 Purpose ... 3
5.2 Size and type codes ... 3
5.2.1 General ... 3
5.2.2 Size: two alphanumeric characters ... 3
5.2.3 Type: two characters ... 4

6 Operational marks ... **4**
6.1 General ... 4
6.2 Mandatory operational marks ... 4
6.2.1 Maximum gross and tare masses ... 4
6.2.2 Air/surface container symbol ... 5
6.2.3 Warning sign of overhead electrical danger ... 5
6.2.4 Height mark for containers higher than 2,6 m (8 ft 6 in) ... 5
6.2.5 Width mark for containers with an overall width greater than 2 438 mm (8 ft). ... 5
6.3 Optional operational mark (maximum mass of payload) ... 5

7 Physical display of marks ... **5**
7.1 Size and colour of marks ... 5
7.2 Layout and location of marks ... 6
7.2.1 General ... 6
7.2.2 Layout of marks ... 6
7.2.3 Location of marks ... 9

Annex A (normative) **Determination of check digit** ... **12**

Annex B (normative) **Symbol to denote air/surface container** ... **14**

Annex C (normative) **Sign warning of overhead electrical danger** ... **15**

Annex D (normative) **Size code designation** ... **16**

Annex E (normative) **Type Code designation** ... **18**

Annex F (normative) **Height marks for containers higher than 2,6 m (8 ft 6 in)** ... **24**

Annex G (normative) **Overall width marks for containers wider than 2 438 mm (8 ft)** ... **25**

Bibliography ... **26**

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 104, *Freight containers*, Subcommittee SC 4, *Identification and communication,* in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee CEN/TC 119, *Intermodal Loading Units and Cargo Securing (ILUCS),* in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

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This fifth edition cancels and replaces the fourth edition (ISO 6346:2022), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

— improvements made to readability of tables related to code characters (Table D.1, Table D.2);

— modification to Table E.1 for new detailed type codes and description of existing codes;

— removal of the limitation for marking only containers built in conformance with the ISO 1496 series, which can be marked with ISO Size Type Codes.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user’s national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

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Freight containers — Coding, identification and marking

1 Scope

1.1 This document specifies a system for the identification and presentation of information about freight containers. The identification system gives guidelines for general application, for example in documentation, control and communications (including automatic data processing systems), as well as for display on the containers themselves.

It defines the methods of displaying identification and certain other data (including operational data) on containers by means of permanent marks.

1.2 This document specifies:

a) a container identification system, with an associated system for verifying the accuracy of its use of marks;

b) a coding system for data on container size and type, with corresponding marks for their display;

c) operational marks, both mandatory and optional;

d) physical presentation of marks on the container.

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1.3 This document defines the terms “mandatory” and “optional” and provides guidelines for the use of the designated marks. The terms “mandatory” and “optional” do not refer to the requirements of any regulatory body.

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1.4 This document is applicable to all freight containers covered by ISO 668, the ISO 1496 series, ISO 8323 and is applicable to:

— containers other than those covered by the International Standards listed in Clause 2;

— container-related or detachable equipment, or both.

NOTE 1 Containers marked according to previous editions of this document need not be re-marked.

1.5 This document does not apply to temporary operational marks of any kind, permanent marks, data plates, etc. which can be required by intergovernmental agreements, national legislation or nongovernmental organizations.

NOTE 2 Some of the major international conventions whose container-marking requirements are not covered in this document are as follows:

— International Convention for Safe Containers (1972, as amended) (CSC), International Maritime Organization (IMO);

— Customs Convention on Containers 1956 and 1972, related to temporary admission and transport under customs seal.

— Convention on Temporary Admission (Istanbul, 26 June 1990), related to temporary admission.

This document does not cover the display of technical data on tank containers (see ISO 1496-3), nor does it, in any way, include identification marks or safety signs for items of cargo which can be carried in freight containers.

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2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 1496 (all parts), *Series 1 freight containers — Specification and testing*

ISO 8323:1985, *Freight containers — Air/surface (intermodal) general purpose containers — Specification and tests*

ISO 10374, *Freight containers — Automatic identification*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
mandatory mark
mark applied to the container that is essential to identify the owner, the specification of the container and the safe operation of the container

3.2
optional mark
marks applied to the container that provides additional information for a greater comprehension of the operation of the container and its use

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4 Identification system and its associated marks

4.1 Identification system

4.1.1 General

The identification system shall consist only of the following elements, all of which shall be included:

— owner code: three letters (see 4.1.2);

— equipment category identifier: one letter (see 4.1.3);

— serial number: six numerals (see 4.1.4);

— check digit: one numeral (see 4.1.5).

4.1.2 Owner code

See Key reference (1) in Figures 1 to 4

The container owner code shall consist of three capital letters, shall be unique and shall be registered with the registration authority.

The name and contact information of the registration authority for this document can be found at www.iso.org/maintenance_agencies.

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4.1.3 Equipment category identifier

See Key reference (2) in Figures 1 to 4

The equipment category identifier consists of one capital letter of the Latin alphabet as follows:

— U for all freight containers;

— J for detachable freight container-related equipment;

— Z for trailers and chassis.

4.1.4 Serial number

See Key reference (3) in Figures 1 to 4

The container serial number shall consist of six Arabic numerals. If the series of significant numerals does not total six, they shall be preceded by sufficient zeroes to make up six numerals (for example, if the series of significant numerals is 1234, the serial number is 001234).

4.1.5 Check digit

See Key reference (4) in Figures 1 to 4

The check digit provides a means of validating the transmission accuracy of the owner code and serial number and shall be determined in accordance with Annex A. The check digit shall validate the owner code, equipment category identifier and serial number of the container.

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4.2 Identification marks

The use of marks in accordance with the identification system specified in 4.1, i.e. owner code, equipment category identifier, serial number and check digit, is mandatory for freight containers and recommended for all equipment as stated in 4.1.3. The characteristics (size, shape, layout, etc.) detailed in 7.1 and 7.2.2 shall be displayed as nearly as practicable in accordance with Clause 7, i.e., legible to the human eye.

5 Size and type codes and their associated marks

5.1 Purpose

The type and main external dimensions of the container shall be identified with codes marked on the container.

5.2 Size and type codes

5.2.1 General

This information is mandatory for the marking of containers covered by the International Standards listed in Clause 2 and shall be coded as in 5.2.2 and 5.2.3.

The size and type codes, when displayed on the container, shall be used as a whole, i.e., the information must not be broken into its component parts.

The size and type codes shall be displayed in accordance with Clause 7.

5.2.2 Size: two alphanumeric characters

See Key reference (5) in Figures 1 to 4

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The container size (i.e. external dimensions) shall be indicated by two characters as follows:

— First character: numeric or alphabetic character representing the length.

— Second character: numeric or alphabetic character representing the width and the height.

These two characters shall be determined in accordance with Annex D.

5.2.3 Type: two characters

See Key reference (6) in Figures 1 to 4

The container type and main characteristics shall be indicated by two characters as follows:

— First character: alphabetic character representing the container type.

— Second character: numeric or alphabetic character representing main characteristics related to the container type.

These two characters shall be selected in accordance with Annex E.

NOTE For the purpose of exchanging data when indication of the main characteristics is not essential, the "type group code designation" as shown in Annex E can be used.

6 Operational marks

6.1 General

The marks in this section are not intended to correspond to any particular code (e.g., for use in data transmission or any other purpose). They are solely intended as markings for use on freight containers to convey certain information or give visual warnings.

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6.2 Mandatory operational marks

6.2.1 Maximum gross and tare masses

The maximum gross and tare masses shall be marked on a container as:

MAX GROSS	00 000 kg
	00 000 lb
TARE	00 000 kg
	00 000 lb

For safety reasons, containers tested in conformance with the approved methods specified in the ISO 1496 series applicable to the type of container in question shall be uniformly marked with the maximum gross mass.

Furthermore, the "maximum gross mass" marked on the container in accordance with this document shall be identical to that shown on the International Convention for Safe Containers [3] (CSC) Safety Approval Plate.

As indicated above, the masses shall be expressed in both kilograms (kg) and pounds (lb).

NOTE 1 kg = 2,204 lb.

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6.2.2 Air/surface container symbol

All air/surface containers shall display the symbol specified in Annex B.

6.2.3 Warning sign of overhead electrical danger

All containers equipped with ladders shall display a warning sign in accordance with the details given in Annex C.

6.2.4 Height mark for containers higher than 2,6 m (8 ft 6 in)

All containers higher than 2,6 m (8 ft 6 in) shall bear the following mandatory marks:

a) on both sides, a height mark similar to that described in Annex F;

b) an area of alternating black and yellow stripes on the top members of each end frame and side wall at each corner adjacent to the corner fitting, of 300 mm (12 in) minimum length, that can be seen from the ground or from the top. See Figure 5.

In addition, any other optional marks, such as a mirror image of the mark described in Annex F, may be displayed at any convenient location (e.g. front wall).

6.2.5 Width mark for containers with an overall width greater than 2 438 mm (8 ft).

All containers with an overall width greater than 2 438 mm (8 ft) shall bear a mark similar to that described in Annex G on the ends and the roof at both ends.

Where there is insufficient space to fit the marking on the ends or the roof, for example on tank containers, the marking shall be as wide as is practicable on the ends and may be omitted on the roof.

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6.3 Optional operational mark (maximum mass of payload)

It is common industry practice to mark containers with maximum payload in addition to the maximum gross and tare masses.

If used, the maximum mass of payload should be marked on a container in accordance with the requirements of 6.2.1, positioned after the maximum gross and tare masses as follows:

MAX GROSS	**00 000 kg** **00 000 lb**
TARE	**00 000 kg** **00 000 lb**
PAYLOAD	**00 000 kg** **00 000 lb**

7 Physical display of marks

7.1 Size and colour of marks

The letters and numerals of the owner code, equipment category identifier, serial number and check digit shall be not less than 100 mm (4 in) high.

The letters and numerals for MAX GROSS, TARE and, when used, PAYLOAD shall be not less than 50 mm (2 in) high.

All characters shall be of proportionate width and thickness, they shall be durable and in a colour contrasting with that of the container.

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