Packaging

One of the requirements for the safe transport of commodities is the packaging which must be adapted to the specific goods (some goods require airtight or water-proof packaging to avoid damage). Different commodities may, however be packed together if they are of the same type´.

To make handling operations, (also called goods handling or stevedoring), easier goods tend to be more and more dispatched in unit loads, i.e. standardized parcels. Hence the evolutions has been towards the packaging of smaller parcels into pallets and crates, of liquid cargoes into drums, of such goods as cottons or flour into bales or bags which are all much more convenient to handle and stow in the ship's hold.

Some parcels must bear special signs indicating their contents, or warning stevedores, against rough handling. These signs may be stenciled directly on the parcel or displayed on a label. For example "D.G. Labels (Dangerous Goods labels) to be kept dry". "To be kept dry", "Keep in cool place", indicate this parcels should be placed in specific places aboard the ship. Other labels are indication to handling operations, "this side up/down", "Handle with care", "no hooks", etc.

The development of containers seems to have been the most striking feature of the evolution of packaging in recent years.

Easy handling and stowing explain their rapid growth, but so does the range of possibilities they offer standardized containers(20 footers, TEU's) are available for goods of all types and specific types can be resorted to for special shipments

A single shipper may need a complete container (FCL/Full Container Load), or only part of it in which case consolidation, or "Groupage" - will take place several shipments (LCL Less Than Container Load) Packing a consignment into a container is the stuffing operation carried out in the stuffing shed. The opposite operation is referred as stripping.

Labels placed on each container should indicate a number of information measurements - or dimensions - payload, tare weight, gross weight and net weight. Each box should also bear a date plate as well as CSC plate (Container safety certificate) to indicate it confirms to approved standards of safety.