



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

Industry reference guide for tarping imported goods



Biosecurity Operations Division – 13 January 2025

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment, and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

Version control

Updated versions of this document will be published on the department's website.

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Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to provide reference information to support industry in the application and verification of tarped, imported sea containers and break bulk (BB) goods including Country Action List (CAL) goods.

Background

The departments import conditions information system (BICON) sets out advice in relation to imported goods that require a biosecurity inspection at the port of discharge prior to movement off wharf. Where the inspection is unable to be completed on wharf or biosecurity risk material is identified by the department, and the discharge wharf does not have suitable facilities to enable the risk to be managed onsite, these goods will be directed for movement to an Approved Arrangement (AA) site.

Where it is identified that external biosecurity risk material (soil, plant or other contamination) is likely to dislodge during movement to the AA, the biosecurity officer will direct that the goods must be tarped prior to movement.

The department may also direct goods for a verified tarping. This direction is used where the risk associated with the biosecurity risk material (BRM) is too great, and the goods must be exported or to manage goods identified with risk material subject to heightened seasonal measures. This requires a biosecurity officer to physically verify correct tarping has occurred.

The level of containment required will depend on the type, location and scale of identified BRM identified:

- **Full tarping:** Where contamination is present on multiple surfaces of the container or break bulk goods, or
- **Partial tarping:** Where contamination is only identified underneath or in a specific area of the container or break bulk goods.

Types of biosecurity tarping directions

Post inspection of the goods on wharf and where tarping is required, the department will issue either a direction for goods to be tarped and moved without the requirement for a biosecurity officer verification or a direction to be tarped with biosecurity officer verification required.

Tarping and movement without biosecurity officer verification

Any imported goods (sea freight container or break bulk (BB), including CAL) with an associated direction that requires tarping and permits movement is to be verified by the BIP upon receipt of the goods at the AA site.

Two directions will be issued concurrently by the department to the person in charge of the goods to manage the biosecurity risk identified:

- Direction 1 of 2 ***Movement allowed - To specified location***
- Direction 2 of 2 ***Other Treatments - Cleaning as Directed and Re-insp.***

Examples of these direction types and Additional comments can be found at [Attachment B](#)

CAL goods may also receive a different second direction:

- Direction 2 of 2 **Ext. Container Insp – Movement** - if CAL containers require deconsolidation and further inspection at an AA, or
- Direction 2 of 2 **Re-inspection of goods** – if CAL breakbulk goods cannot be inspected on wharf and require inspection at an AA.

Tarpping with biosecurity officer verification required

In certain situations, goods directed for tarping will need to be physically verified by a biosecurity officer. This includes tarping directions in relation to:

- goods that have been identified by the department on inspection as having live biosecurity risk material (live insects or animals)
- goods that do not have an associated Movement Allowed – **To** specified location direction.
- goods being managed under seasonal measures including for brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) risk.
- goods directed for export.

Applying tarping materials to imported goods

Prior to commencement

Before starting the tarping process, the person performing the tarping must be in possession of relevant biosecurity direction issued by the department that authorises the permitted activity for the goods.

Check the Biosecurity direction to confirm:

- direction title and required activities.
- the container number, serial number/VIN or other identification matches the goods.
- the type of tarping required – partial or full. The type or location of the tarping required is identified in the direction comments.
- whether a departmental verification inspection is required.

It is important to check the details on these directions to ensure all details are correct prior to commencement. If any details do not match the direction, do not perform the tarping and contact the department on 1800 900 090.

Live pest detection during tarping

If any live or dead animals/invertebrates/insects are detected on or have left the container or BB goods during the tarping activity (this includes both the application of and removal of the tarping), immediately:

- cease the action of tarping or removal of tarping of the goods,
- if safe, seek to contain any escaped live animal or pest,
- use knockdown spray if live invertebrates or insects are sighted,

- If snails or slugs are sighted ring with salt or other approved barrier,
- secure the goods,
- call the **See. Secure. Report** hotline on 1800 798 636 or contact an onsite biosecurity officer,
- follow any directions given by the biosecurity officer to manage the risk. This may include further directions from the department.

Appropriate tarping materials

Goods directed by the department to be tarped must be secured using strong, flexible, water-resistant or waterproof material, such as:

- cloth tarpaulins, including canvas or polyester coated with polyurethane,
- tarpaulins made of plastics such as polyethylene,
- plastic wrap that adheres to surfaces, such as shrink wrapping, or
- other department approved methods of containment. e.g. containerised goods.

To ensure that tarping is secure and remains in place to contain all biosecurity risk material during any movement, the use of additional secure methods may be used (e.g. tape binders, ropes, or other securing measures appropriate to the tarping method used).

Note: Any tape used to secure ends or seams must be heavy duty duct or cloth tape at least 50 mm wide. Gaffer, electrical or sticky tape is not to be used. Any additional materials used are subject to inspection along with the tarping material or must be disposed of as biosecurity waste.

All materials must prevent passage of, or leakage of, all biosecurity risk material and potential undetected pests during movement, transport and storage. It is important that industry consider the type, size and quantity of equipment required to contain biosecurity risk material prior to commencement.

Before applying the tarping material, confirm the tarp or other material to be used is free of holes or damage.

- If there are no holes or tears, continue tarping the goods.
- If there are holes or tears, do not apply the tarp materials.

Tarping types

Dependent on the level and location of biosecurity risk material identified on inspection, the goods will require either a partial or full tarping to manage any loss of biosecurity risk material (BRM) during transport. Examples of different tarping types for containers and goods with photographs can be found at [Attachment C](#).

Partial

Partial tarping is used to partially enclose areas of goods or containers where BRM has been detected, but the contamination is such that full tarping is not required, and the risk can be secured by partially tarping specific areas of the container or goods.

- Apply the tarp(s) to the specified areas of the goods as per the direction comments

- Ensure the ends of the tarp are overlapped and securely fastened over the specified areas.
- Ensure the ends or any seams of the tarp(s) overlap and are securely fastened with suitable tape able to withstand transportation and climatic conditions.
- Ensure that there are no holes or gaps in the tarping where BRM could dislodge from the container or goods.

Full tarping

Full tarping (also known as envelope tarping) is used to completely enclose a container or goods to secure identified BRM.

- Apply the tarp(s) to the goods, ensuring that it has sufficient overlap, can be securely fastened and fully encloses the goods.
- Ensure the ends or any seams of the tarp(s) overlap and are securely fastened with suitable tape able to withstand transportation and climatic conditions.
- If multiple tarpaulins have been used, ensure the lower tarpaulin completely envelopes the underside of the goods and is overlapped by the top tarpaulin/s and joins are sealed with tape.

Note: When conducting full tarping, please be aware of the container type and any special requirements that may be needed e.g. full reefer requiring power to the motor (and no tarping of the motor).

Important: Upon completion of tarping the goods, the BIP must write the container number, serial number/VIN or other identification that matches the goods clearly on the tarpaulin to ensure traceability.

Prior to transporting goods off wharf

Prior to movement of the goods off the wharf, the transport operator must be in possession of the Biosecurity movement direction and must verify the goods to confirm the following:

- the container number or VIN, serial number or other identification number matches the direction
- the goods have been tarped in accordance with the biosecurity direction comments (example partial or full)
- the ends or any seams of the tarpaulin(s) are overlapped and securely fastened
- the tarping will adequately contain loose BRM during transport, and
- the tarping will prevent the escape of any BRM.

If tarping meets the above conditions, the goods can be moved offsite in accordance with the issued biosecurity direction. If any issues are identified the goods must not be moved.

Approved Arrangement responsibilities

The department no longer requires a verification inspection to be performed on most tarped goods prior to movement off wharf for treatment or further inspection. To ensure ongoing monitoring of tarping activities, the receiving AA site will be required via the entry direction comments to perform a visual verification of the goods on arrival. The department may also perform random verification activities to ensure that biosecurity risk during movement is being maintained.

It should be noted that this new requirement to verify the tarping on arrival does not form part of AA class conditions and will not be included in existing AA auditing processes.

The person that verifies the tarp on behalf of the AA must be an accredited person registered under the AA.

Important: If the approved arrangement applies the tarpaulin on wharf prior to movement, the person verifying the tarpaulin upon arrival to the AA site must not be the same. This ensures that transparency and accountability of the process is maintained.

On arrival of the goods

Upon receipt of the tarped goods at the AA, the AA must verify the following information:

- the container number or VIN, serial number or other identification number
- that the degree of tarping (full or partial) has been performed as directed by the department
 - if full tarping has been directed, the goods are fully enclosed,
 - if partial tarping has been directed, the identified areas on the biosecurity direction have been adequately tarped and secured,
- that the ends or any seams of the tarpaulin(s) still overlap and are securely fastened with suitable tape or other secure methods post transportation and withstood any climatic conditions, and
- if multiple tarpaulins have been used, ensure the lower tarpaulin completely encloses the underside of the goods and is still overlapped by the top tarpaulin(s).

Detection of biosecurity concerns regarding tarping on arrival at AA

If the tarping on the goods does not comply with:

- the direction issued by the department, or
- the tarping requirements in this guide, or
- the tarping has been compromised during transport,

The Biosecurity Industry Participant (BIP) must immediately:

- secure any loose biosecurity risk material (including from the transport vehicle) and dispose of in a biosecurity bin,
- take photographs of the goods or tarping concerns,
- report the incident to the department immediately by using the online [Reportable biosecurity incident form](#) or by calling the **See. Secure. Report.** hotline on 1800 798 636.

When reporting please ensure you provide the following information:

- biosecurity entry number associated with the biosecurity direction,
- container number, VIN, serial number or other identification number,
- details of who performed the tarping.

Note: Once the report is submitted to the department, the goods may be actioned by the AA as per the biosecurity direction requirements, unless live BRM is found. In this instance BIPs are to refer to the [Live pest detection section](#).

Note: Photos may not be required when submitting a report, however you may be contacted by the department to provide photos, which will assist with the assessment of the tarping concerns and ensuring that adequate action can be taken to mitigate biosecurity risk.

Release or disposal of used tarping materials

Due to risks of cross-contamination during transport, it is important that any tarpaulins and associated items such as strapping or tape are managed as part of the consignment and in accordance with relevant approved arrangement class conditions, import conditions and departmental directions.



Further information

For further information about tarping requirements, visit the departments website: [agriculture.gov.au/ on Arrival](https://agriculture.gov.au/on-arrival)



Definitions

Term	Definition
Biosecurity risk	<p>Examples of biosecurity risks include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> live insects, animals, and plants, dead insects, animals, and plants, insect and animal products (borer holes, frass, faeces, webs, hives), plant products (seeds, bamboo, timber, and bark), soil, dirt, clay and sand, mould, water, including watermarks.
Full tarping	Fully enclosing goods to prevent BRM dislodging during transportation, using one or more tarpaulins or other approved methods.
Goods	<p>Defined in section 19 of the Biosecurity Act 2015 as including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an animal, a plant (whether moveable or not), a sample or specimen of a disease agent, a pest, mail, any other article, substance or thing (including, but not limited to, any kind of moveable property). This definition also captures biosecurity waste.
Partial tarping	<p>Partially enclosing goods to prevent BRM dislodging during transportation, using one or more tarpaulins or other approved methods.</p> <p>Partial tarping may be used where the contamination is such that full tarping is not required, and the risk can be secured by partially tarping specified areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underside or lower parts of goods (at minimum, tarping must cover above wheel arches, machinery tracks or wheels). Attachments on machinery (i.e., buckets, blades etc). Machinery spare parts / attachments separate to main machine unit Underside tarping of containers.
Tarpaulin (tarp)	<p>A sheet of strong, flexible, water-resistant, or waterproof material, often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cloth such as canvas or polyester coated with polyurethane, or made of plastics such as polyethylene.
Plastic wrap	A plastic film that adheres to surfaces and is used to contain the Biosecurity Risk Material (BRM) in situ, during transportation of the contaminated cargo to its destination for treatment.
CAL	A list of countries and ports identified by the department as having documented high levels contamination or high pest risks. The list is available on the department's Country Action List webpage .
Break Bulk	Non-containerised goods that must be loaded individually or cannot fit into a container. Typical break bulk goods includes machinery, vehicles and timber.
Sea Container	Unit used for storing and/or transporting sea cargo by vessel.

**Biosecurity Directions Industry verification of tarping
Country Action List (CAL) Goods**

 Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Biosecurity Direction Movement Allowed To specified location	ABCDE123 ABCDE123	 Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Biosecurity Direction Other treatments Cleaning as Directed & Re-Insp	ABCDE123 ABCDE123
<p>Direction 1/2 A biosecurity officer has detected biosecurity risk material on [GOODS DESCRIPTION & SERIAL #/ OR CONT #] and has determined that the level of biosecurity risk associated with the goods is unacceptable.</p> <p>Pursuant to s132(c) of the Biosecurity Act 2015 the goods must be [PARTIALLY/FULLY specify area] tarped by the person in charge of the goods. The goods must be tarped as per the Industry Reference Guide for Tarping Imported Goods on the department website to ensure contamination is contained during transport.</p> <p>Following tarping, pursuant to <u>s132(a)</u> of the Biosecurity Act 2015, the goods listed on this direction must be moved directly to the approved arrangement site nominated on this direction.</p> <p>Goods that have not been tarped are not authorised to move from the wharf.</p>		<p>Direction 2/2 A biosecurity officer has detected biosecurity risk material on [GOODS DESCRIPTION & SERIAL #/ CONT #] and has determined that the level of biosecurity risk associated with the goods is unacceptable.</p> <p>[TYPE OF RISK] risk material was identified on [WHERE] of container/s [GOODS DESCRIPTION & SERIAL #/ CONT #].</p> <p>I direct the person in charge of the goods to treat the container/s by removing the biosecurity risk material by [DEPARTMENT APPROVED CLEANING METHOD / PRESSURE WASHING].</p> <p>These directions are issued under <u>ss132(b)</u>, 133 and 138(1)(a) of the Biosecurity Act 2015. Following cleaning, the goods will be reinspected by a biosecurity officer pursuant to <u>s125(1)</u> of the Biosecurity Act 2015.</p>			
<p>Additional comments: [TYPE OF RISK] risk material was identified on [WHERE] of container/s [CONTAINER #/s].</p> <p>Stack separately and ring with salt or other approved barrier prior to and upon completion of tarping.</p> <p>Any biosecurity concerns regarding the tarping must be reported to the department immediately.</p>		<p>Additional comments: The accredited person under the class 1.1 approved arrangement that conducts the cleaning must verify on arrival that the tarping was performed as per the Industry Reference Guide for tarping on the department website and remains secure. Any biosecurity concerns regarding the tarping must be reported to the department immediately.</p> <p>All Biosecurity Risk Material must be removed and disposed of as biosecurity waste, & all areas must be accessible at the time of re-inspection. Any tarpaulins and associated items such as strapping or tape must be managed as part of the consignment and in accordance with Class 1.1, 1.3 or 4.3 approved arrangement conditions.</p> <p>Inspections to be booked via the Biosecurity Client Portal.</p>			

All other Non CAL Goods


 <p>Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</p> <p>Biosecurity Direction Movement Allowed To specified location</p> <p>ABCDE123 ABCDE123</p>	 <p>Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</p> <p>Biosecurity Direction Other treatments Cleaning as Directed & Re-Insp</p> <p>ABCDE123 ABCDE123</p>
<p>Direction 1 / 2 A biosecurity officer has detected Biosecurity Risk Material on [GOODS DESCRIPTION & SERIAL #/ OR CONT #] and has determined that the level of biosecurity risk associated with the goods is unacceptable.</p> <p>Pursuant to s132(c) of the Biosecurity Act 2015 the goods must be [FULLY/PARTIALLY - specify area to be tarped] tarped by the person in charge of the goods. The goods must be tarped as per the Industry Reference Guide for Tarping Imported Goods on the department website to ensure contamination is contained during transport</p> <p>Following tarping, pursuant to s132(a) of the Biosecurity Act 2015, the goods listed on this direction must be moved directly to the approved arrangement site nominated on this direction.</p> <p>Goods that have not been tarped are not authorised to move from the wharf.</p>	<p>Direction 2/2 A biosecurity officer has detected Biosecurity Risk Material on [GOODS DESCRIPTION & SERIAL #/ OR CONT #] and has determined that the level of biosecurity risk associated with the goods is unacceptable.</p> <p>The goods listed on this direction must not be moved from the approved arrangement site nominated on this direction.</p> <p>I direct the person in charge of the goods to treat the goods by removing the biosecurity risk material by [CLEANING METHOD].</p> <p>These directions are issued under s132(b), 133 and 138(1)(a) of the Biosecurity Act 2015.</p> <p>Following cleaning, the goods will be reinspected by a biosecurity officer pursuant to s125(1) of the Biosecurity Act 2015.</p>
<p>Additional comments:</p>	<p>Additional comments:</p> <p>The accredited person operating under the approved arrangement that conducts the cleaning must verify on arrival that the tarping was performed and as per the Industry Reference Guide for Tarping Imported Goods on the department website.</p> <p>Any biosecurity concerns regarding tarping must be reported to the department immediately.</p> <p>All biosecurity risk material must be removed & all areas accessible at the time of re-inspection.</p> <p>Any tarpaulins and associated items such as strapping or tape must be managed as part of the consignment and in accordance with Class 1.1, 1.3 or 4.3 approved arrangement conditions.</p> <p>Inspections to be booked via the Biosecurity Client Portal.</p>

Examples of compliant tarped goods


The following tables provides inspection guidance in relation to tarpaulin application types and verification assessment outcomes.

Tarping requirement	Image
Partial Tarp	 <p>The image column contains three photographs illustrating compliant tarping methods. The first photo shows a truck load with a black tarp covering the top and sides, secured with a blue strap. The second photo shows a blue PDL container (ID: PDLU 215840 2261) sitting on a grey tarp. The third photo shows a large stack of goods wrapped in clear plastic, with a blue tarp covering the base and sides.</p>

Tarping requirement	Image
	

Tarping requirement	Image
Full Tarp	

Examples of non-compliant tarped goods

Tarping requirement	Image	Reason
Full Tarp		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upper and lower tarpaulins not sufficiently sealed,• Upper tarpaulin does not sufficiently overlap lower tarpaulin,• Additional secure methods (tape /strapping) used is insufficient.

Tarping requirement	Image	Reason
Partial Tarp		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tarping appears sufficient however strapping has not been completed.• Goods must be fully ready prior to transportation to the AA.

Tarping requirement	Image	Reason
Full Tarp		<p>Goods not considered to be sufficiently fully tarped, to manage the biosecurity risk as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • underside of goods are not sealed, • anchor points in tarp are oversized and unsealed. <p>Goods must be completely enclosed and sealed under this direction.</p>