

Losses of containers at sea The truth behind the numbers



The World Shipping Council (WSC) has released its annual report on containers lost at sea, which clearly shows the positive development in container safety in the liner shipping industry. So according to the report, in 2022, 661 containers were lost at sea. This represents less than one-thousandth of 1% (0.00026%) of the 250 million packed and empty containers transported each year, with over 7 trillion worth of cargo transported. dollars.

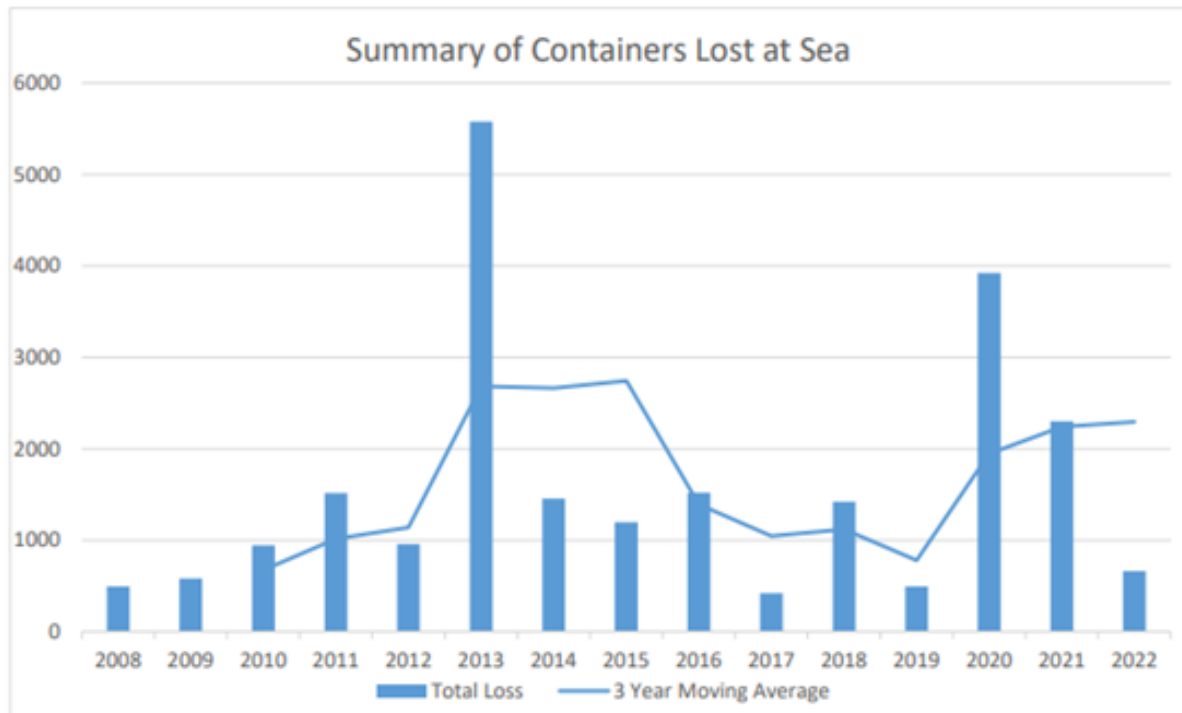
During 2022, most WSC member carriers had no or single-digit container losses, with only two companies reporting losses of more than 100 units in the year above. Looking at the results of the total fifteen years (2008-2022) investigated, the WSC estimates that an average total of 1,566 containers were lost at sea each year. Average losses for the last three years were 2,301 containers per year (2020-2022).

It may also be useful to compare the above results with the trend of the three-year averages reported in each of the previous updates. In the first period (2008-2010), total losses averaged 675 per year and then quadrupled to an average of 2,683 per year in the following period (2011-2013). This increase was largely due to the sinking of the MOL Comfort in 2013, which resulted in the loss of 4,293 containers, but also to the grounding and loss of the M/V

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Rena in 2011, which resulted in the loss of approximately 900 containers.

Analysis of the Sixteen-Year Trends



Graph 1: Losses of containers at sea

In the following period (2014-2016) one vessel was sunk, the "SS El Faro" (2015). Even with that, the three-year average annual loss for the period was 1,390, about half that of the previous period. The downward trend continued in 2017-2019, when the three-year average annual price in losses almost halved, again to 779. Also, there were no individual losses as significant as those in previous periods.

The average annual loss for the 2020-2021 biennium increased to 3,113, from 779 in the previous period, due to major incidents. In 2020, 'ONE Opus' lost more than 1,800 containers to bad weather. "Maersk Essen" also experienced severe weather in 2021, which resulted in the loss of approximately 750 containers.

A total of 661 containers were lost at sea in 2022, out of the 250 million transported. This represents the lowest percentage losses since the survey began in 2008. The improved numbers are positive news, but there is no time for complacency and efforts must continue to reduce the number of containers lost at sea. At this point it should be mentioned that the loss of the containers, in addition to economic damage, is also a great shipping risk, if we take into account that they are two-thirds submerged in water, they have no echo on the ships' radar screens, resulting in a night collision of a vessel with the drifting container to cause considerable damage to the vessel, and if it is a fishing vessel, it may be fatal.

The Marin TopTier Joint Industry Project, a program aimed at reducing container losses at sea, has already delivered concrete results on the causes of container losses at sea along with recommendations and educational materials on how to avoid and manage different types of hazardous rolling of the ship