

Containers lost at sea in 2024 remain low compared to 10-year average

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by Shipping Telegraph



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A total of 576 containers were lost at sea in 2024, an increase from the record-low 221 in 2023, but still well below the 10-year average of 1,274. The figures, published by the World Shipping Council (WSC) in its annual Containers Lost at Sea report, underscore continued industry progress on safety and prevention.

Container losses in 2024 were influenced by ongoing disruption in the Red Sea region, which led to a significant shift in global trade routes.

“While this represents an increase from the record-low 221 containers lost in 2023, it remains well below the 10-year average of 1,274 containers lost annually, underscoring continued industry progress on safety and prevention,” says the WSC.

Vessel transits around the Cape of Good Hope increased by 191% compared to 2023. This area is well-known for hazardous maritime conditions, which contributed to a

concentration of losses. The South African Maritime Safety Authority says around 200 containers were lost in this region alone.

Despite these challenges, the proportion of containers lost relative to those transported remains exceptionally low, at just 0.0002 percent of the approximately 250 million containers transported globally in 2024.

“This year’s report confirms that the vast majority of containers are transported safely across the oceans. Still, even one container lost is one too many,” said Joe Kramek, president and CEO of the World Shipping Council.

WSC’s Containers Lost at Sea report is based on direct input from member companies representing approximately 90% of the global container vessel capacity.

“Despite continued loss-prevention efforts by the industry, the re-routing of transits away from the Red Sea and around the Cape of Good Hope to keep global commerce moving has ocean carriers navigating one of the world’s most challenging routes, as highlighted in this report,” Joe Kramek concluded.

The report highlights continued efforts across the liner shipping industry to improve container handling, stowage, and securing practices.

Safety is a shared responsibility, and the report outlines the critical roles played by each part of the supply chain, from shippers and freight forwarders to terminal operators and ocean carriers.

It is worth mentioning that mandatory reporting of container losses to the IMO will begin in 2026, following adoption of new SOLAS amendments.