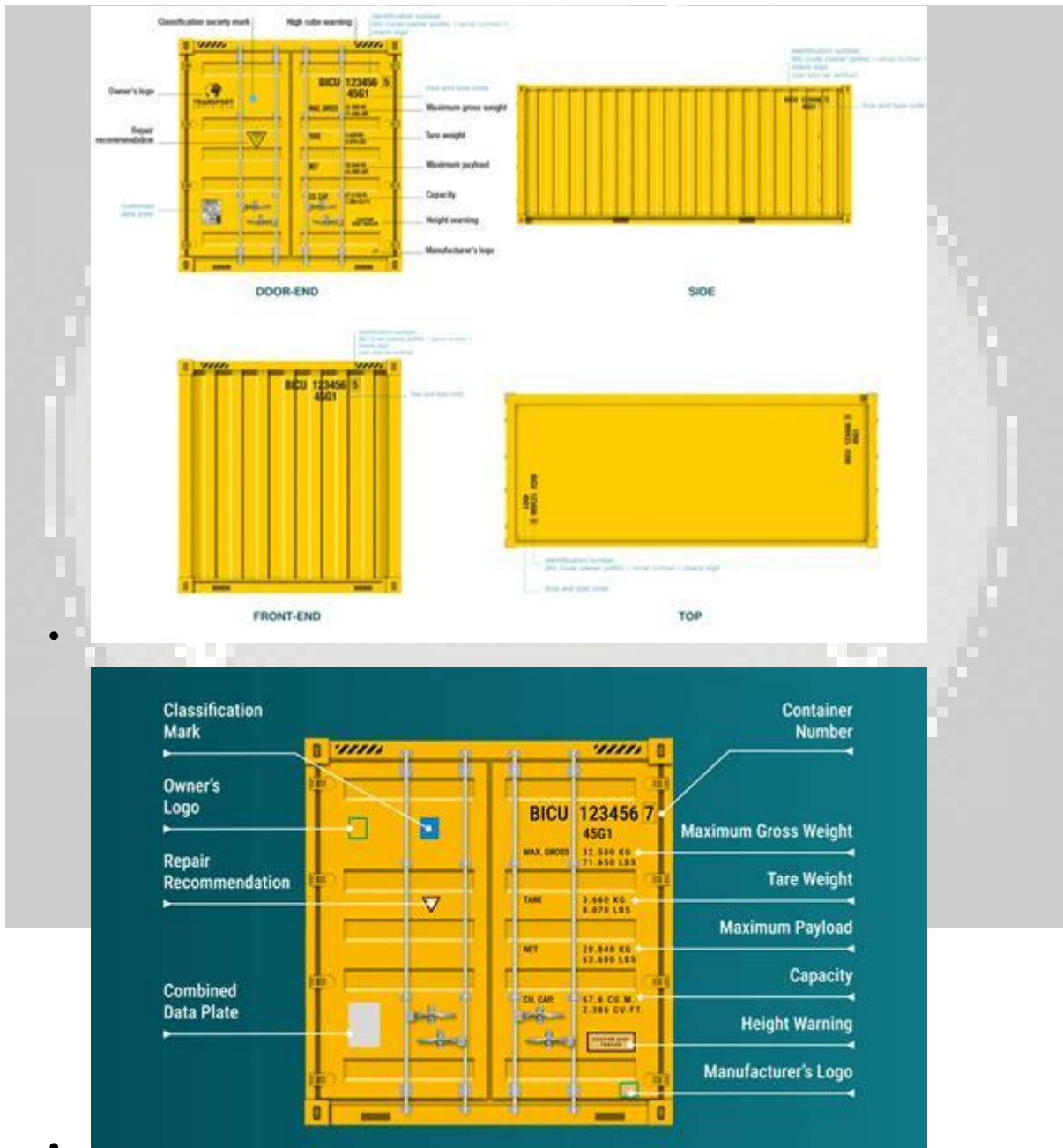




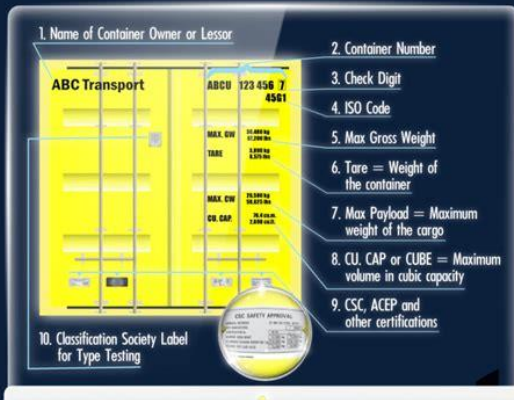
Report combining Lebanese shipping company ownership details, an explanation of container letters and numbers, and the prefixes that relate to Lebanese operators Visual Guide to Container Markings

This infographic shows how container numbers and codes are displayed and what they mean:



SHIPPING CONTAINER MARKINGS

Everyone who works with shipping containers uses the container markings. All markings have a meaning and understanding it is critical for handling containers, whether you are a hauler, exporter, importer, container depot or a warehouse, and whether a container is stationary or in motion.



LEGEND

1 Name of Container Owner or Lessor – This identifies the owner or lessor of the container, for example, the shipping line Maersk Line, or the leasing company Triton International.

2 Container Number – The main identifier of the container. A container number is made up of 7 characters in an alpha-numeric sequence, made up of 4 letters and 3 numbers. This number is unique to a container and is never duplicated.

- First 3 letters: Owner code (e.g. MAE for Maersk Line)
- 4th letter: Category identifier, U, J, or Z:

U for all freight containers
J for detachable freight container-related equipment
Z for trailers and chassis

- First 6 digits: Serial number
- 7th digit: Check digit (see below)

This owner code is registered with the Bureau International des Containers et du Transport Intermodal (BIC).

3 Check Digit – It's the last digit of the container number listed above. This number is used to identify if the container number sequence is valid or not.

4 ISO Code – International Standards Organisation under their code ISO6346 gives each container type a unique ISO Code in order to avoid any ambiguity in identifying the size and type of container.

5 MAX. GW or Max Gross Weight – Max Gross Weight indicates the maximum weight that the container can carry. Gross weight includes the tare weight of the container.

6 TARE – This is the tare weight which is the weight of an empty container. This is an important weight to be considered by all ship operators and planners as this weight needs to be included when container stowage planning is done.

7 MAX. CW or Max. Payload – The maximum weight of the cargo that can be packed in the container. This is the weight that is shown on the bill of lading and it DOES NOT INCLUDE THE TARE WEIGHT OF THE CONTAINER. Shippers must pay special attention to ensure this weight is not exceeded when calculating the weight of the cargo.

8 CU, CAP, or Cube – The maximum volume in the cubic capacity of the container.

9 CSC, ACEP & Other Certifications – Every legal and in-service container will have a valid safety approval plate called CSC (Container Safety Convention) plate in accordance with the International Convention on Safe Containers of 1972.

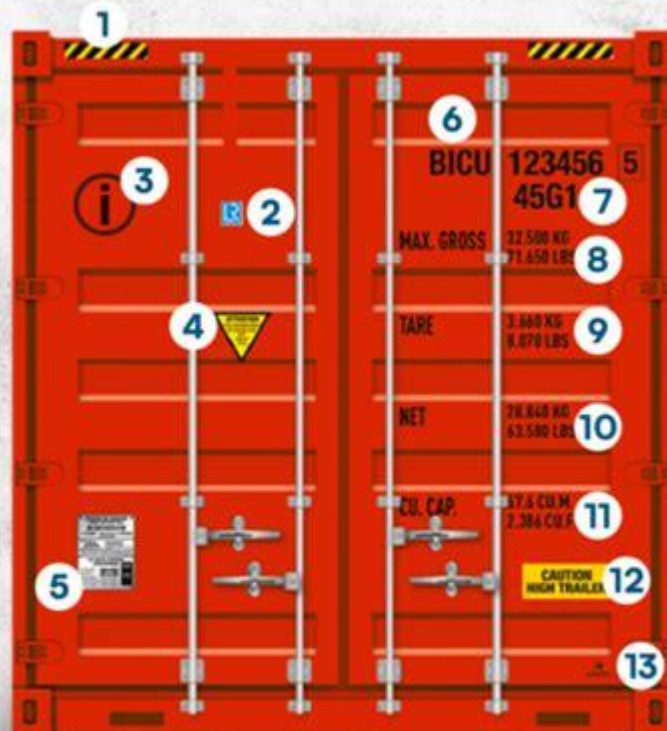
10 Classification Society Label for Type Testing – This label shows the classification society that has tested and certified this container for strength, cargo worthiness, and seaworthiness.

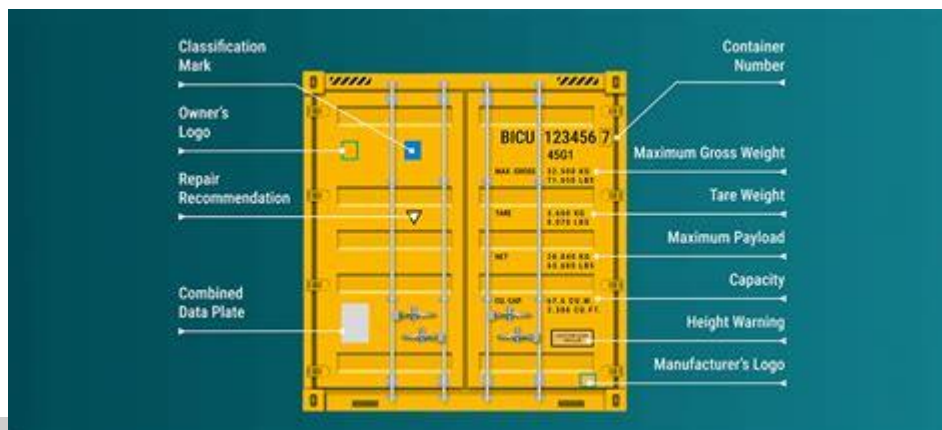
SOURCES

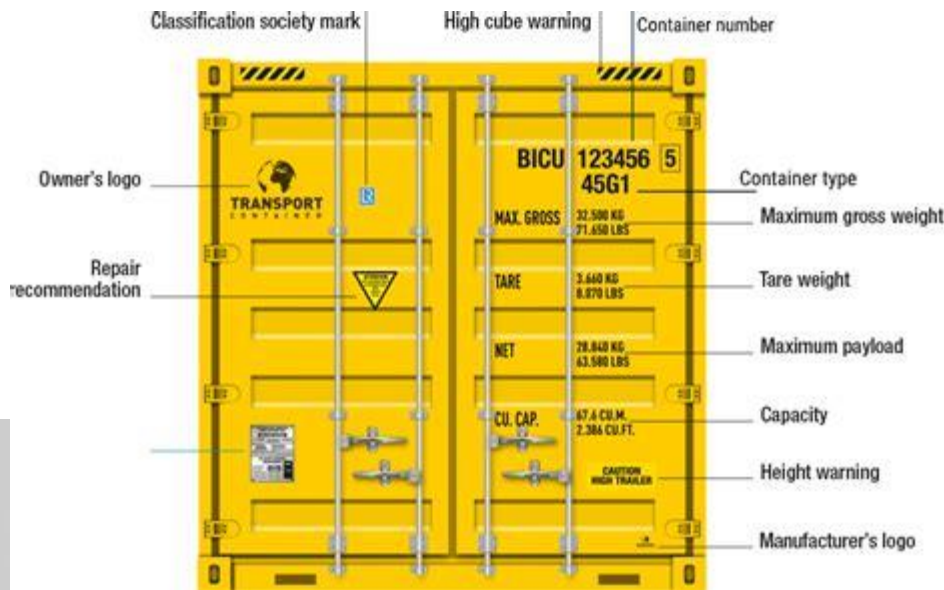
<https://shippingandlogisticsresource.com>
<https://www.bic-code.org/bic-codes/check-digit-calculator>
<https://www.containercontainer.com/ISO6346>
<http://www.imo.org/en/about/conventions/tabconventions/pages/international-convention-for-safe-containers-csc.aspx>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_6346
<http://www.pier2pier.com/>

CONTAINER MARKINGS EXPLAINED

LOTUS
CONTAINERS







1. How Container Numbers Work

- **Owner Prefix (4 letters):** Identifies the company that owns or operates the container.
- **Serial Number (6 digits):** Unique identifier for that specific container.
- **Check Digit (1 digit):** Mathematical control number to validate the code.
- **Size & Type Code (e.g., 22G1):** Defines dimensions and type (20ft general purpose, refrigerated, tank, etc.).
- **Weight Markings:** Max gross, tare, and net weight for safe loading.
- **CSC Plate:** Safety approval plate with manufacturer and build details.

2. Lebanese Shipping Companies & Ownership

Lebanon has both **local operators** and **branches of global logistics firms**. Key players include:

Company	Type	Ownership
GMA Lebanon	Freight forwarding & customs	Locally owned
Black Blues Logistics	Freight forwarding	Locally owned
Medtrans Shipping Co.	Shipping & forwarding	Lebanese-owned
Transorient S.A.L.	Logistics & forwarding	Lebanese-owned

Company	Type	Ownership
Cargo Care International	Freight forwarding	Lebanese-owned
Bentraco Shipping	Port agent & logistics	Lebanese-owned
TCL (Trans Cargo Logistics)	Freight forwarding	Lebanese-owned
DHL Lebanon	Global courier	Subsidiary of DHL Group (Germany)
Aramex Lebanon	Regional logistics	HQ in Dubai, publicly traded

3. Container Prefixes Related to Lebanese Companies

Unlike global giants (MSC = MSCU, Maersk = MAEU), **Lebanese firms are mostly freight forwarders and agents**. They typically **do not own large fleets of containers** registered with BIC (Bureau International des Containers). Instead, they lease or operate containers from international shipping lines.

- **Local Lebanese companies:** Usually handle documentation, customs clearance, and forwarding. Their containers often carry prefixes of the **global shipping lines they partner with** (e.g., MSCU, CMAU, HLXU).
- **Global operators in Lebanon:** DHL and Aramex use their own logistics networks but rely on international container fleets.

This means you'll rarely see a "Lebanese-specific" prefix painted on a container. Instead, Lebanese companies manage containers belonging to MSC, Maersk, CMA CGM, etc.

4. Key Takeaways

- **Letters on containers = ownership prefix.** They tie the box to a shipping line or leasing company.
- **Lebanese firms = mostly forwarders/agents.** They don't have unique prefixes but operate containers from global fleets.
- **Inspection focus:** Customs track containers by prefix and documentation, not by stickers or local company names.

Briefing Document: Lebanese Shipping Companies, Container Codes, and Detection Context

1. Lebanese Shipping Companies & Ownership

Lebanon's shipping sector is a mix of **local freight forwarders** and **branches of global logistics firms**.

Major Local Operators

- **GMA Lebanon** – Freight forwarding, customs clearance, warehousing. Locally owned.
- **Black Blues Logistics** – Sea freight, trucking, customs brokerage. Locally owned.
- **Medtrans Shipping Co.** – Shipping and forwarding, Lebanese-owned.
- **Transorient S.A.L.** – Logistics and forwarding, Lebanese-owned.
- **Cargo Care International** – Sea, air, and land transport. Lebanese-owned.
- **Bentraco Shipping** – Port agent and logistics. Lebanese-owned.
- **TCL (Trans Cargo Logistics)** – Containerized cargo and customs clearance. Lebanese-owned.

Global Operators with Lebanese Branches

- **DHL Lebanon** – Subsidiary of DHL Group (Germany).
- **Aramex Lebanon** – HQ in Dubai, publicly traded on Dubai Financial Market.
- **FedEx Lebanon** – Branch of FedEx Corporation (USA).

Key Insight: Local Lebanese firms generally act as **forwarders and agents**, while global brands provide integrated logistics. Lebanese companies rarely own large fleets of containers; they operate containers leased from international shipping lines.

2. Container Markings Explained

Every shipping container carries standardized codes that identify its owner, specifications, and safety approvals.

- **Container Number (11 characters):**

- Example: MSCU 123456 7
- **MSCU** → Owner/operator prefix (MSC = Mediterranean Shipping Company).
- **123456** → Serial number.
- **7** → Check digit (validation).

- **Size & Type Code (e.g., 22G1):**

- Defines dimensions and type (20ft general purpose, refrigerated, tank, etc.).

- **Weight Markings:**

- Max gross, tare, and net weight for safe loading.

- **CSC Plate:**

- Safety approval plate showing compliance with the International Convention for Safe Containers.

Key Insight: These codes **designate the container's identity and physical limits**, not its contents. Customs databases use them to trace ownership and movements worldwide.

3. Container Prefixes & Company Links

Prefixes are registered with the **Bureau International des Containers (BIC)** and tie each container to a company.

Common Global Prefixes Seen in Lebanese Trade

- **MSCU** → Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC, Switzerland).
- **MAEU** → Maersk Line (Denmark).
- **CMAU** → CMA CGM (France).
- **HLXU** → Hapag-Lloyd (Germany).

- **COSU** → COSCO Shipping (China).
- **APZU** → Evergreen Marine (Taiwan).

Lebanese Context

- **Local Lebanese firms** (e.g., GMA, Black Blues, Medtrans) typically **do not have their own prefixes**.
- They operate containers belonging to global shipping lines (MSC, Maersk, CMA CGM, etc.).
- **Global brands in Lebanon** (DHL, Aramex, FedEx) use their own logistics networks but rely on international container fleets.

Key Insight: You won't see "Lebanese-specific" prefixes on containers. Instead, Lebanese companies manage containers with **global prefixes** routed through Beirut.

4. Detection Context (Handheld vs. Port Systems)

- **Handheld tools:** Radiation detectors, IMS trace detectors, chemical sniffers, canine units.
 - Effective for detecting **external traces** (radiation, vapors, residues).
 - Cannot penetrate sealed steel containers.
- **Port systems:** Large X-ray scanners, radiation portal monitors, risk-profiling software.
 - Provide full inspection capability.
 - Used at UK ports like Felixstowe, Southampton, London Gateway, Liverpool.

Key Insight: Handheld scanners are **screening aids**, while container prefixes and port systems provide the **traceability and detection backbone**.

5. Conclusion

- Lebanese shipping is dominated by **local forwarders** and **global logistics brands**.
- Container markings (letters + numbers) identify **ownership and specifications**, not cargo contents.
- Prefixes like **MSCU, MAEU, CMAU** are the ones most relevant to Lebanese trade routes.

- Effective detection requires a **layered approach**: handheld tools for traces, container codes for ownership, and port scanning systems for full inspection.

Shipping companies in Lebanon typically don't have unique container prefixes (like MSCU for MSC or MAEU for Maersk). Instead, they use **stickers, decals, or labels** on containers and cargo packaging to show their company name, logo, and contact details. These are usually **rectangular labels** with the company's branding, sometimes alongside Arabic and English text.

What a Lebanese Shipping Sticker Looks Like

- **Company logo** (e.g., GMA Lebanon, Black Blues Logistics).
- **Text in Arabic and English** (company name, "Shipping & Forwarding," contact info).
- **Colours**: Often blue, red, or green depending on the brand.
- **Placement**: Applied to container doors, cargo packaging, or documentation envelopes.

A **Lebanese container** will not usually carry a "Lebanese-specific" ownership sticker the way global shipping lines do (like MSCU for MSC or MAEU for Maersk). Instead, here's what you would typically see on a container moving through Beirut or operated by a Lebanese freight forwarder:

Stickers & Markings on Lebanese-Handled Containers

- **Global Shipping Line Prefix & Logo**
 - Most containers in Lebanon belong to international fleets (MSC, Maersk, CMA CGM, COSCO, Evergreen).
 - You'll see their **painted prefix code** (e.g., MSCU, MAEU, CMAU) and often a large logo decal.
- **Forwarder / Agent Stickers**
 - Lebanese companies like **GMA Lebanon, Black Blues Logistics, Medtrans, Transorient** don't own fleets.
 - They apply **small adhesive stickers or decals** with their company name, logo, and contact info.
 - These are usually bilingual (Arabic + English) and placed on the **container doors** or cargo packaging.

- **Customs & Handling Labels**

- Temporary stickers for **hazardous goods (IMO placards)**, **inspection seals**, or **port clearance tags**.
- Issued by Beirut port authorities or shipping agents.

- **Documentation Pouches**

- Clear plastic sleeves taped to the container with bills of lading, manifests, or customs papers.
- Often stamped with the Lebanese forwarder's logo.

Key Insight

- The **big painted letters/numbers** (e.g., MSCU 123456 7) always relate to the **global container owner**.
- The **smaller Lebanese stickers** are **agent/forwarder labels** — they identify which Lebanese company is handling the cargo, not who owns the container itself.
- So a “Lebanese container sticker” is typically a **company decal** showing the local forwarder's branding, applied alongside the international shipping line markings.

What a Lebanese Container Sticker Represents

- **Company Branding:** Local forwarders (e.g., GMA Lebanon, Black Blues Logistics, Medtrans) apply adhesive decals with their logo and name.
- **Bilingual Text:** Stickers often show Arabic and English side by side.
- **Contact Details:** Phone numbers, addresses, or website links for the Lebanese agent.
- **Placement:** Usually on the **container doors** or on **documentation pouches** taped to the container.
- **Purpose:** Identifies the *handling agent* in Lebanon, not the container's global owner (which is shown by the painted prefix like MSCU, MAEU, CMAU).

Briefing Document: Lebanese Companies, Container Codes & Stickers

1. Lebanese Shipping Companies

- **Local Forwarders:** GMA Lebanon, Black Blues Logistics, Medtrans, Transorient, Cargo Care, Bentraco, TCL.
- **Global Brands in Lebanon:** DHL, Aramex, FedEx.
- **Ownership:** Local firms are Lebanese-owned; global brands are subsidiaries of international corporations.

2. Container Markings

- **Owner Prefix (4 letters):** Ties the container to a global shipping line (e.g., MSCU = MSC, MAEU = Maersk, CMAU = CMA CGM).
- **Serial Number (6 digits):** Unique ID.
- **Check Digit (1 digit):** Validates the code.
- **Size/Type Code (e.g., 22G1):** Defines dimensions and type.
- **Weight Markings & CSC Plate:** Safety and load limits.

3. Lebanese Stickers

- **Forwarder Labels:** Rectangular decals with company logo + bilingual text.
- **Documentation Pouches:** Clear sleeves taped to container doors with bills of lading, often stamped with Lebanese agent branding.
- **Hazard Placards:** IMO dangerous goods labels if applicable.

4. Key Insight

- Painted codes = **global container owner**.
- Stickers = **Lebanese handling agent**.
- Lebanese companies don't have unique BIC prefixes; they operate containers from MSC, Maersk, CMA CGM, etc., but mark them with their own stickers for identification.



Prepared by JAOC

