

§ 176.900 Packaging and stowage of cotton and vegetable fibers; general.

- (a) Cotton, Class 9, NA 1365, Cotton, wet, Division 4.2, UN 1365, and other vegetable fibers, Division 4.1, being transported on a vessel must be securely baled and bound. Each bale of cotton or vegetable fibers must be covered with bagging on at least three-fourths of its surface, including both ends. Cut cotton linters may be accepted for transportation by vessel when baled and covered with bagging on the soft sides only if the bale is compressed to a density of at least 512 kg/m³ (32 pounds per cubic foot) and it is bound with at least six bands per bale. Any poorly compressed bale or any bale having damaged bindings may not be transported by vessel.
- (b) Each bale of Cotton, wet, Division 4.2, UN 1365 must be stowed separately from any bales of dry cotton or vegetable fibers, in a 'tween deck space, and not overstowed. Any bale of cotton or vegetable fibers which is saturated with water may not be transported by vessel.
- (c) Bales of cotton or vegetable fibers showing contact with oil or grease may not be accepted for transportation by vessel.
- (d) Cotton or vegetable fibers must be stowed in a hold or compartment in accordance with the following requirements:
- (1) All traces of oil or residue in the hold or compartment must be removed;
 - (2) A recently painted hold or compartment may not be used unless it is thoroughly dry;
 - (3) Each ventilation cowl serving the hold or compartment must be fitted with a spark screen;
 - (4) When a bulkhead of the hold or compartment is common with a boiler room, engine room, coal bunker, or galley and subjected to heat, a wooden bulkhead must be erected between the bulkhead and any cotton or vegetable fibers. This wooden bulkhead must be at least 15 cm (6 inches) from a boiler room bulkhead, and at least 5 cm (2 inches) from an engine room, coal bunker, or galley bulkhead;
 - (5) Each 'tween deck hatch must be closed with hatch covers, tarpaulins, and dunnage; however, metal hatch covers which are sealed by other means to provide equivalent protection may be used;
 - (6) Each hold or compartment must be equipped with a carbon dioxide or overhead water sprinkler system or other approved fixed extinguishing system. Before loading, the extinguishing system must be examined to ensure that it is in good working condition; and
 - (7) Each hold or compartment must be clear of all debris and swept as clean as practicable before loading.
- (e) Naked lights or any fire likely to produce sparks are not permitted on the vessel, dock area, or on any lighters alongside a vessel during loading or unloading of cotton or vegetable fibers.
- (f) Upon completion of stowage, each opening must be completely closed. Where required, tarpaulins must be fitted and secured in place to provide a tight hold. During a period of temporary stoppage of loading or unloading, a hatch may be left open. However, during that period, a fire watch, designated by the master or officer-in-charge, must be stationed in the hold or compartment in which the cotton or vegetable fibers are stowed.
- (g) At least one fire hose must be connected while cotton or vegetable fibers are being loaded or unloaded. Each fire pump must be operated before any loading or unloading. Pressure must be maintained on each fire main during the loading and the fire hose laid out ready for immediate use. Portable fire extinguishers must be placed to be readily available. The fire hose, fire pumps, and fire extinguishers may be the vessel's equipment or shore equipment.
- (h) Smoking is not permitted on a vessel during the loading or unloading of cotton or vegetable fibers except at those times and in those places designated by the master. "NO SMOKING" signs must be conspicuously posted in appropriate places, and the responsible person in charge of the loading or unloading (see §176.57 of this part) must ensure that they are observed.
- (i) Cotton or vegetable fibers may be stowed in the same hold over bulk sulfur if the sulfur has been trimmed and leveled and the

hold is thoroughly cleaned of sulfur dust. A tight floor of two layers of 2.54 cm (1 inch) crossed clean dunnage boards must be laid on the sulfur before cotton or vegetable fibers are stowed. These substances may be stowed alongside each other in the same hold if they are separated by a tight dustproof wood bulkhead.

(j) Cotton or vegetable fibers may not be stowed in a 'tween deck hold over bulk sulfur in a lower hold unless the 'tween deck hold has been thoroughly cleaned of all sulfur dust and the 'tween deck hatch covers are in place and covered with tarpaulins and dunnage.