

# 12.1 General precautions

12.1.1 When applicable the [consignee](#) or the receiver of a CTU should check whether the unit is externally in good condition, and not significantly distorted, cracked or bent. If such damage is found, the receiver should document and notify it to the [CTU operator](#). Specific attention should be paid to damage that may have influenced the condition of the cargo within the unit.

12.1.2 Where a seal number is stated on the transport documentation, the seal should be checked. If the reference number on the seal differs from the documentation or if the seal appears to be damaged or is missing, this could indicate that the CTU has been opened during transport. In such case the CTU operator should be contacted.

12.1.3 If a CTU shows signs of abnormally high temperatures it should be moved to a safe place and the fire services notified. Care should be taken to ensure that the fire-fighting methods used are suitable for the cargo in the unit.

12.1.4 Persons opening a CTU should be aware of the risk of cargo falling out (for details see [annex 5](#), section 6).

12.1.5 CTUs with substances used for cooling or conditioning purposes present a particular risk of a toxic or asphyxiant atmosphere (see paragraphs 11.2.2 and 11.2.3). Before opening the doors, it should be ascertained by measurement that no harmful atmosphere is present in the CTU.

12.1.6 Some cargoes may emit harmful fumes. Especially after long sea voyages, it has been repeatedly realized that apparently non-hazardous goods such as shoes, textile products, furniture or the like emit harmful substances to an extent making the atmosphere in the CTU dangerous. Care should be taken not to come into contact with the internal atmosphere when opening the doors. Therefore, any CTU should be ventilated before allowing personnel to enter, preferably by mechanically forced ventilation. If this is not available, the doors should be opened for a period of time - enough to allow the internal atmosphere to regularize with the ambient.

12.1.7 CTUs that are fumigated should be properly marked. On occasion, marks may become obliterated or lost during transport. As CTUs may then not be appropriately marked, the doors and vents should be checked. Tape applied to door gaskets or to the vents may indicate the risk of fumigant presence.

12.1.8 If there is a particular reason to suspect damage to [packages](#) with dangerous goods, expert advice should be sought before unpacking of the unit starts. When possible, a safety data sheet (SDS) should be required from the [consignor](#), to determine appropriate measures and necessary personal protection equipment