

FAQ Headings

About Qube Containers

- **What are the benefits of buying from Qube Containers?**

Qube Containers work tirelessly to supply the highest quality containers at the lowest price. When our containers are built in the factory the specification is carefully chosen to create a container that will have the longest possible lifespan for our customers. From the paint thickness, to the ventilation system, to the steel thickness we don't cheap out to bolster our profit margins. We build containers the right way with a firm focus on building long term business relationships and growth through personal recommendations. We have decades of experience in delivering containers that will be suitable for your needs. We will give you our honest opinion on the containerised solution that we think would work best for you. Our customer focus means we aim to meet and exceed customer expectations, many of whom may be buying a container for the very first time with Qube. We treat large and small customers equally, we realise the importance looking after buyers' needs.

- **How do I spot a Qube Containers shipping container?**

That's simple – if you see the QUBU prefix on a container then it's one of ours! All containers need a BIC code to identify their owner. This is managed by the Bureau International des Containers (BIC) and you can see us in the register here: <https://www.bic-code.org/container-bic-code/qubu/>

Container Facts

- **What is an ISO shipping container?**

Shipping containers are made of a material called corten steel. The reason that they are made from this material is because it means even when there is no paint protection on the container (i.e. when it is scuffed and scraped) it will form a rust-like patina, which will protect it from further corrosion. This is perfect for a potential life at sea, which many containers undertake. Containers have corrugations on the roof and walls and are designed to allow surface water to dissipate so that the container stays as dry as possible. A real strength of shipping containers is their high tensile strength and resistance to corrosion. When they are manufactured they are built strictly to ISO (International Standards Organisation) standards so that they can be used modularly at sea, by rail and on road using transport equipment without the fear of incompatibility. Containers are usually 8ft wide and 8ft 6in high. Common lengths are 10ft, 20ft and 40ft. The incredible flexibility, longevity and security that containers provide means they continue to enjoy incredible popularity worldwide.

- **How much does a shipping containers weigh?**

A 20ft container weighs up to 2.2ton in weight and a 40ft container weighs up to 3.7ton.

- **Can shipping containers be stacked on top of each other?**

Shipping containers can easily be stacked one on top of another. Customers typically stack just 2 or 3 containers high and will use equipment called twistlocks to anchor them securely together using the ISO corner castings. When containers need to be held tightly together horizontally then bridge clamps may be used which will limit movement and require re-tightening to maintain a good fit.

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With stacked containers a staircase is usually needed, these can either be portable, on wheels, or fixed, which are permanent. You may need to pay a delivery uplift to stack your containers for you.

- **How are containers made?**

Our containers are manufactured in the Far East to our Qube Containers specification. Here is the step-by-step process that is involved from start to finish:

The first stage is to unroll and cut the corten steel sheets. The corten steel is then de-greased and shot blasted before being primed with a zinc rich primer. After this the corten steel sheet is then pressed to form the front panels, side panels and roof sheets. This pressing process creates the corrugation, which helps with strength.

The side panels are then welded together and lashing rings are added to the top side rail. This forms the whole container side wall. Welds are added all round for strength. Next, the front corner posts are folded into shape. Front panels are pressed with ventilation holes punched and seam welded. The front header and bottom sill rail are prepared on a jig with the top and bottom corner castings added.

The rear corner post, header, sill and rear panel are assembled at this point. The door panels are made with corrugations and ventilation holes are added. Door hardware such as cam keepers, hinge blades and lock boxes are welded on using a jig.

The C section cross members are pressed, forklift pockets are fabricated and welded together. The structure is then fully welded together and assumes the familiar appearance of a shipping container. Welds are shot blasted, and the container is painted. The floor is laid by drilling and screwing in to the crossmembers. Vents are then riveted into position, CSC plates are added along with markings. After watertightness testing the container is complete and will leave our production line!

- **Are shipping containers actually wind and watertight?**

Yes! The containers are manufactured and tested to satisfy this criteria. You'll notice that there are very heavy duty rubberised door seals on your container, which stops water ingress. Containers sold by Qube Containers will be tested for wind and watertightness and provided with a warranty to back it up. New build containers benefit from a 5 year wind and watertight warranty, while used containers have 12 months.

Vents are made with a labyrinth system, which means any water spray, no matter how heavy, cannot physically travel up the labyrinth and enter the container. Used containers will be more susceptible to leaks if they are significantly rusted. Due to the properties of corten steel, rust in of itself doesn't indicate that a container has a leak – as there may still be a good amount of steel thickness underneath the rust. That's why depot staff conduct testing prior to the release of any container.

New Vs Used

- **What is a new build container?**

A new build container is known by many different names in the industry. You may hear it called new, one-trip, one-way, one-use, once-shipped and single-use amongst other things. They are all the same thing, however, so don't be confused by the variation of name. A one-trip container is a brand-new container, which has been manufactured in the Far East and then loaded with Cargo. Once it has been loaded with a consignment it will be shipped to the UK on a vessel. The container will be handled approximately 13 times on its journey to the UK and emptied at its destination. From here it will be placed in one of our depots and remain there until it is sold. A new build is the newest type of container that you can buy in the UK as we don't build containers domestically anymore. You may notice marks on the container from when it has been handled, this could include light scuffs or scrapes on the corner castings, dints from light knocks against other containers and some visible marks to the internal walls of the container and/or wooden floor. The internal marks are caused the use of a forklift which loads and unloads the pallets in the container for its single trip. We include images of our new build containers at our UK depots on our site so you can see what to expect.

- **What is the lifespan of a new build container?**

You can expect an almost maintenance-free experience for the first decade of ownership of your new build container. After this point the lifespan will be dictated by how much care and maintenance you give to it. In the very long-term the rubber door seals may perish and need replacing. Further into the future you may have rusting, which can eventually create a physical hole. To extend the life of the container a repair weld would be needed to bring it back to a wind and watertight state. Qube Containers are built with thicker steel than low-specification containers that you may find elsewhere, which gives you peace of mind for longer.

- **How old are used containers?**

As a rule of thumb, we would say a used container should be around 15 years old. They may be older than this, the key thing is that they will be wind and watertight when they are sold to you and include a 12 month wind and watertight warranty. We mostly buy these from shipping lines when they want to replace them with newer units.

- **What is the lifespan of a used container?**

A used container should last around 10 years with care, attention, and maintenance. For peace of mind, we supply our used containers with a 12-month wind and watertight warranty. We would advise that you schedule door seal checks along with any rusty areas of concern so that maintenance can be performed along with repairs in a timely manner.

Container Delivery

You may find it helpful to read through our delivery infosheet [here](#) before reading through our FAQ.

- **Do you deliver across the whole UK?**

We have depots situated throughout the UK and our network of hauliers mean that we can get containers to almost any location in England, Wales and Scotland. We don't currently deliver to Northern Ireland, however we do sell containers ex-depot for customers who arrange their own onwards delivery to NI. In some locations delivery isn't possible, for example the Channel Islands, and in some locations such as areas of Scotland the delivery price will be high.

- **Will I need planning permission for my shipping container?**

We would always advise for you to check with your local authority prior to the purchase of a shipping container. Some customers have stated that they have had no resistance from their local authority in terms of planning permission, whereas others have encountered issues.

- **What risks should I look out for at my site?**

The most common issues that sites present are overhead cables, trees or buildings that may be in the way of the crane and container when it is being lifted off. Other site issues can be tight turns narrower widths than 10ft. Often overhanging trees and shrubs can be cut back to allow a delivery to happen.

- **How big is the delivery vehicle?**

The vehicle will be around 8ft wide plus wingmirrors. The length is around 60ft. If this vehicle length would cause an issue at your site then please discuss it with the delivery team who may be able to offer a shorter vehicle (provided you are having 20ft containers delivered). The delivery vehicle will be around 12.5ft high and the total height clearance needed will be around 20ft, but additional room just to be safe, is encouraged.

- **Will the haulier drive over grass?**

Generally speaking, drivers won't want to drive over grass because there is a significant chance that they could become stuck. For drivers who agree to attempt a delivery over grass the liability along with any cost for recovering their vehicle will lie with you. For this reason, it is better to plan a delivery route on handstanding so that it is as risk free as possible.

- **Do I really need to prepare the land where I'm placing my container?**

We strongly recommend that you check the land is flat and level where your container is to be placed. This is to give you the best experience in the long term with using your container. If a container isn't placed on level ground then the cargo doors will be difficult to operate, which is known in the industry as racking. Where customers place containers straight onto soft ground it can result in the container sinking and becoming impossible to open because it has fallen beneath ground level meaning the cargo doors are physically obstructed.

- **Which type of surface is best to place the container on?**

Shipping containers by design place their weight through the four corner castings. Some customers use railway sleepers, paving slabs or even dig out where the four corners of the container will be and fill with concrete. Placing a container on wet, soft, uneven ground is the least ideal surface to site a container and will likely cause issues very quickly.

- **What is the lead time from order until delivery?**

Typically, containers are delivered in between 3-5 working days from the date that we receive payment for your container. Please note that during times where stock is more limited and/or hauliers' availability is restricted then this can result in longer lead times. Contact your sales representative for an up-to-date lead times.

Container Hire

- **What is the process of hiring a container?**

Hiring a container is very similar to buying a container from us. There will be a site survey to make sure that the container can be successfully delivered, and we will work out the most appropriate container for your needs. The key difference is that we will need to complete checks to make sure that hiring is right solution for you. The billing process is also different in that you will be billed quarterly in advance. Simply request a quote and our team will guide you through the rest.

- **Which types of containers are available for hire?**

We most commonly hire 10ft, 20ft and 40ft containers. Customers can choose from new or used, depending on their requirements. Less often, we have requests for full side access and tunnel containers, which we will accommodate where we can, providing we have suitable stock available nearby. Refrigerated containers are also a popular choice, which can be rented as new and used in both 20ft and 40ft sizes.

- **What is the hire duration?**

We hire containers for a minimum hire term of 12 weeks. After this it is set to 'quarterly in advance' and can be cancelled at any time. Any additional weeks, which we have payment for will be refunded so that you will only pay for the duration that you had your container. We feel that it is important not to lock customers into lengthy hire contracts, which may not be in their best interests. Equally, if you definitely want to hire a container for many years then we can supply on that basis.

- **What locations do you cover?**

We have depots located throughout the UK to give us the best coverage possible. Most of the time customers will be near one of our locations and the delivery cost will be reasonable. For customers who live in areas which are more difficult to access we can still deliver, it's just that the delivery price would be higher.

- **Can I purchase my hire container in the future I decide I want to keep it?**

We would advise customers that feel they may want to buy the container to speak to our team about it before the hire has been organised. This will allow us to supply containers which can be sold and for the hire terms to be agreed ahead of time so that both parties are happy. Please note, this isn't typically a part of our normal hire process.

Container Conversion

- **What kinds of conversions can you do?**

In short, we can do pretty much anything that you can imagine. Often the only limit is your imagination and budget. There may be different ways of achieving your objectives using a different approach, which our team can advise on along with the customer's input. We can convert any type of container ranging from 10ft used containers right up to 40ft high cube full side access units. We have undertaken a broad range of modifications that range from showstopping feats right through to a simple aperture cut in the side wall of a container. We will do as little, or as much of the project as you need.

- **How long do shipping container conversions take?**

Assuming we have all of the containers in stock and ready to go at the time of your order it can range from less than a week through to two weeks for most straightforward conversion projects. Some projects with a significant scope can span over a number of months and we would provide regular updates on progress.

- **What kinds of things do people have done to a container?**

Customers often have work done such as to install personnel doors, patio doors, windows, electrics, ply lining and serving hatches. Container offices, generator housing, welfare units and stores are some of the more popular projects that we see on a daily basis. We are very used to doing these as well as the more off-the-wall work that we undertake. You can see some examples of customers that we have helped [here](#).

- **Would you purchase our container conversion once we have finished with it?**

We look at the purchase of containers on a case-by-case basis and this includes converted containers. Where we feel there could be a place in our inventory for a container conversion such as yours, we will make an offer. We would cover the cost of collection and make the selling process as easy as possible.

Container Performance

- **Are shipping containers secure?**

Shipping containers are inherently very secure in their design. The locking rods ensure that the container will not open so long as there is a padlock fitted to your lockbox (or padlocks through the customs catches where no lockbox is fitted). Valuable goods and materials are stored in shipping containers globally and the anonymity that they afford the contents of container helps reduce interest from would-be criminals.

- **Do containers suffer from condensation?**

This is a complicated question to answer. In essence condensation occurs when there are temperature differentials to the point that it reaches dew point and forms a liquid.

As a rule of thumb used containers are more prone to condensation due to the fact that they only have vents on the two long sides of the container and the floor is untreated meaning it can hold water like a sponge. Our new build containers are built to a specification, which helps reduce condensation risk as we use the patented XL vent system to maximise airflow. We also polyurethane coat the floor to prevent it absorbing moisture, unlike an untreated floor would. Our containers have vents on all 4 sides of the containers meaning that even in a position where multiple sides are blocked there is still good airflow. We would advise that if your contents are prone to damage from moisture that you purchase our grafotherm condensation treatment for a used container. It is designed to absorb moisture into its honeycomb structure and hold it using surface tension. Once the conditions in the container become more favourable the moisture evaporates and leaves through the vents. Many customers don't choose to purchase grafotherm on our new build containers and report no issues, however if you are overly concerned then grafotherm is available.

- **Are your shipping containers wind and watertight?**

Yes, we give a 5 year wind and watertight warranty on our new containers and a 12 month wind and watertight warranty on our used containers. The containers have heavy duty rubber seals, which keeps water out of the container. Our vents include a labyrinth system so that there is no possibility for rain or any other water from getting inside the container. Depot staff check containers prior to being loaded for delivery to ensure that the container is in a wind and watertight state.

Container Care and Maintenance

- **Do shipping containers need any maintenance?**

New build containers are very low maintenance for the first 10 years of their life. Beyond this it pays off to check whether the door hinges and locking rods are still freely moving and that the door seals haven't degraded. Door hinges and locking gear can be greased to keep it freely moving. Used shipping containers need careful monitoring to ensure that the door seals haven't perished, that the rust hasn't penetrated through and that the locking gear is still functioning correctly. Depending on how much use your used container has you may need to replace sections of the wooden floor over time as it may rot and lose integrity. It is also a good idea to inspect the roof from the inside of the used container to check for any perforations that may develop.

- **What maintenance do I need to carry out?**

One of the most important things for your shipping container is to ensure that it is placed on level ground so that the container doesn't have any undue strain on the cargo doors causing racking.

Door hinges and the locking rod cams and keepers need lubrication to ensure continued smooth operation. Rubber seals may need replacing as time goes on and if there are any areas of concern with rust then an early application of a protective layer of paint may help slow rusting. A new build container shouldn't need any maintenance for quite some time, while a used container will need careful monitoring.

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General

- **Do I have a choice of container colour?**

Yes! With our new build containers you can choose from RAL5010 (gentian blue), or RAL 6007 (bottle green). Used containers will be sold with no guarantee of their colour, they could be brown or green, blue or grey, it's not something that we have control over. You can use our repainting service to have your container painted in any RAL colour of your choice, it's best to choose a dark colour because light colours attract a higher cost due to more coats being needed.

- **What guarantee do I get with my container?**

With new build containers we give a full 5 year wind and watertight warranty. With used containers we include a 12 month wind and watertight warranty as standard. Please note that these warranty periods do not apply to conversions or refrigerated containers, please enquire for more details.

- **If I buy in bulk do I get a discount?**

We can accommodate discounts for bulk container orders. We do sell for a no-nonsense price though, which is based on the costs of manufacturing so these discounts may be lower than other traders may offer (who may have quoted you hundreds more than Qube to start with!). In terms of delivery it always saves you money to have 20ft containers delivered in pairs. For example, if you are charged £200 for a single 20ft and £300 for a pair of 20ft containers then it is £100 cheaper to have two delivered in one trip rather than two separate deliveries.

- **Why are 10ft containers more expensive than 20ft containers?**

It may seem counter intuitive for a smaller container to cost more than a larger container but there are simple reasons for it. With 20ft containers they are mass produced on a continuous production line in the factory, however it is different with 10ft containers. The factory needs to stop production and change tooling in order to make the 10ft containers which means the overhead costs and lost output cost is spread out across the batch of 10ft containers. The next reason that 10ft containers cost more is that we are unable to get any financial assistance with moving the containers from the factory in the Far East over to the UK, this means that we are absorbing all of the transport costs and as a result the container has a higher price to cover costs. In contrast 20ft containers can be loaded with cargo and moved over to the UK by the shipping lines, which results in a much reduced price for our end users.

- **Can I collect the containers myself?**

Yes, absolutely. If you have a vehicle of your own, which is equipped with twistlocks then our depots will happily load your containers for you. If you want to use your own haulier then we would give you a container release reference that your driver would quote at the depot and get loaded up by the depot staff. The price for the container itself would be exactly the same regardless of whether you wanted to have the container delivered, or if you would be collecting it yourself.

- **Can I come and have a look at my container?**

We have photographs of new build containers so you can see an indicative image of how your container will broadly look. For used containers we don't guarantee aesthetics or colour, we are essentially selling a dry space which is wind and watertight guaranteed for 12 months. The reason that it is usually not possible for customers to view containers and pick specific units is due to the high turnover of stock. If you purchased a 20ft used container on Monday with delivery scheduled for Thursday the actual box that would be loaded up on your delivery day could've been buried under 100 containers and completely inaccessible at the time of order. Unfortunately this is the nature of the container industry and a part of the logistics of operating a container depot. If you desperately needed to see a container and it is already out of the stack to one side then this is the only time it may be possible to view.

- **Do you buy containers?**

If you have containers that you want to sell to Qube then we will ask for photos clearly showing the outside and interior of your container along with it's location. Our team will then work on a fair buy price to offer you. Sometimes a container may be in an unsaleable condition, or we may have so much stock of that type already that we aren't seeking to purchase.

- **How do I open and close the cargo doors?**

The right door is the one which you will want to open first. If you have one of our easy open handles on our new builds then you simply flick the customs catch out of the way, lift the handle upwards slightly, then pull it towards yourself while pulling the door towards you. If you have a used container the handles will be at knee level and you'll need to open it in the same way, by pulling the handles towards you slowly to release the cams from the keepers at the top and the bottom of the locking rod. You may need to actually push the handles back on itself so that the door has the leverage needed to pop open. Once the right door is open then you can perform the same function on the left door with the locking rods. To close the container door make sure you close the left door first and keep your eye on the cams and keepers, if the cams aren't engaged in the keepers reverse the process and adjust until all 4 have been correctly engaged. The right door is then closed the same way that you did the left door. All that is left to do after this is to lock your container (a CISA padlock in a lock box is the most secure way to do this).

Payments

- **How do I pay for my order?**

Once you have placed your order we will process a pro-forma invoice for you. You can pay us using BACS, cash, or cheque. We don't currently accept card payment (Visa/Mastercard/American Express) at this time. When hiring a container from us we bill quarterly in advance once we have done relevant credit checks. Please note: we currently only hire to companies and not private individuals.