

Hatch cover fatalities warning



Recent reports from a number of maritime safety authorities have highlighted dangers that can arise from the operation of hatch covers, and the level of care needed to ensure the safety of the personnel involved.

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) of the UK Department for Transport has issued a case note about the death of a chief officer during a hatch cover removal operation on board a vessel at anchor in the southern North Sea. The MAIB reports that, while a hatch cover was being manoeuvred into its specially adapted position on deck, the chief officer came between it and the accommodation bulkhead. As he did so, the hatch cover developed a swing, striking the chief officer and crushing his pelvis against the bulkhead. The MAIB says that factors contributing to the accident involved the chief officer's positioning in a restricted place between the bulkhead and a suspended hatch cover, without an easy exit. And it adds that additional danger resulted

from the removal of the hatch cover while at anchor, while the ship was subjected to the forces of the sea and a degree of rolling and pitching.

Further, in Hong Kong, a recent Marine Department Notice reported the death of a stevedore whose ankle became wrapped in the loose end of a tag line attached to a hatch cover being lifted by the derrick of a dumb lighter. The stevedore was dragged along by the line to the open hatch of a cargo hold, into which he fell to his death. The HK Marine Department highlighted a number of recommendations for enhanced safety, including the need for coiling of lines as well as for effective communication between personnel involved in all phases of the movement of hatch covers. It also urged "owners, operators, masters of vessels and lighters, stevedoring companies, employers and persons in charge ... to take all reasonable and necessary precautions to ensure observance of ... safety measures by their personnel engaged in shipboard operations ..."

New TSS for Finisterre

The IMO's 23rd Assembly met recently and adopted resolutions including an amendment to the Cape Finisterre Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS). The amendment involves the introduction of new traffic lanes, established for vessels carrying dangerous or pollutant bulk cargoes.

Failure to comply with the new scheme could be classified as an infringement of the Spanish Ports and Merchant Marine law. Penalties may include the arrest of the vessel at a Spanish port pending provision of an acceptable guarantee. The new scheme will enter force on June 1, 2004.

ISPS reminder

The International Ship & Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code has been incorporated into SOLAS and comes into force on July 1, 2004. Compliance with flag states' statutory requirements - including the ISPS Code - is a condition of P&I cover, so the importance of obtaining the necessary certification for applicable vessels, by that date, cannot be over-emphasised.

Any Members still seeking guidance on the requirements and responsibilities imposed by the Code are reminded of the explanation provided by the International Chamber of Shipping's publication, *Maritime Security: Guidance for Ship Operators*, which can be obtained at: www.marisec.org/pubs/pubslst.htm

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Stowaways becoming more inventive and determined



P &I correspondent Cranston Transportes Integrados in Rio Grande, Brazil, reports three recent, similar cases of stowaways found on board ships from Africa calling at Brazilian ports to load cargo.

In all three cases, the stowaways were found hiding in the vessel's rudder stock housing, just below the steering gear room. Luckily for them, the ships were all in light condition.

However, Cranston says that, in one case, the master of a chemical tanker

ballasted the aft peak tank to trim the vessel for tank cleaning, and the stowaways spent two days up to their knees in water.

The Club's experience is that stowaways are becoming more inventive and determined in their efforts to secrete themselves on board vessels.

As a result, owners are in some cases having to be equally inventive in their attempts to deny them access. *(see photo above).*

Members are accordingly reminded of the need for great vigilance to prevent stowaways gaining access to any part of their vessels before leaving port, especially in those areas of the world where stowaways are known to be a serious potential problem.

In-house training

The well-attended Bilbroughs programme of in-house training seminars is continuing.

Forthcoming events include a presentation by Bilbrough's Nigel Hartley and Simon Chapman on 'Operational Surveys' on Tuesday, February 10, at 1200 hrs. And Jan Bagger of Clarksons Shipbrokers will deliver a talk on 'Chartering and the Role of the Shipbroker' on Wednesday, February 25, also at 1200 hrs.

Club Members or their representatives are very welcome to attend either or both of these presentations. Those who are interested should contact Bilbrough's Information Officer Arthur Crawford at: arthur.crawford@bilbrough.co.uk

Close consultation needed to resolve FD&D issues

As legal charges continue to increase, the value of close co-operation and consultation by Members with the Club, before instructing lawyers, is intensified.

In those matters where the involvement of lawyers is necessary, the Club's wide claims experience

means that it will usually be in a position to assist Members in identifying the most appropriate individual or firm, to work on the case in question. The Club's input should also help the effort to ensure that legal fees are kept to reasonable levels. Moreover, close liaison of this sort with the Club should assist in

meeting FD&D claims notification requirements. And similar high levels of consultation will continue to be important as the claim progresses and as, for example, any other decisions likely to impact on the level of charges - such as the appointment of experts - need to be taken.



Problems with DRI pellet cargoes in the Caribbean

A number of problems involving the loading of direct reduced iron pellets at Point Lisas in Trinidad have recently been reported by P&I Club correspondent Steers / Cariconsult.

DRI pellets are listed in the IMO Code of Safe Practice for the Carriage of Solid Cargoes in Bulk, which stipulates that this cargo requires inerting and temperature monitoring throughout loading, as well as further monitoring of oxygen, hydrogen and temperature levels until discharge.

Steers / Cariconsult says that problems involve excessive heating of cargo, contamination of ships' decks and coatings with corrosive dust, shoreside fires during loading, and loading of burning DRI. There has also been an incident resulting in the death of a ship's second officer, potentially arising from improper management of inerting systems.

They add that several cases "appear to indicate physical shortcomings in shore facilities, chain-of-command failure, or inadequate application of safe practices in relation to the loading and handling of DRI. The role of the Competent Authority is likely to come under scrutiny.

"It is recommended that particular caution be exercised when loading



Problems involved with DRI pellet shipments can include excessive heating

DRI pellets in Trinidad, and masters should be diligent to ensure that all recommendations of the IMO Code are properly carried out, and any deficiencies reported to shipowners so that proper steps can be taken prior to vessels sailing.

"Vessels affected by DRI dust - whether loading the cargo themselves or performing operations at adjacent facilities - should protect radar and other sensitive equipment, record and protest dust contamination, and obtain full advice on requirements for cleaning affected surfaces."

For further information, contact Rupert Steer of Steers/ Cariconsult International Limited on: Tel +1 246 423 6412 / Fax: +1 246 423 0985, or email: rupert.cconsult@caribsurf.com

EU halon ban in force

Despite reported protests by some member states about the severity of the deadline for its enforcement, legislation has been introduced by the European Commission which forbids the presence of halon and other ozone layer-depleting substances on board ships registered in EU states, with effect from January 1, 2004.

The relevant regulation calls for the decommissioning of fire protection systems and extinguishers containing halon from all EU flagged vessels. An exemption is available for ships equipped to carry flammable liquids and / or gases as cargo, which were built before 1994. The exemption is in respect of such vessels that are using a halon system for critical purposes - namely the inerting of occupied spaces where the release of flammable liquid and / or gas could occur. And details of its application should be sought from relevant flag states.

Additionally, IMO has published a list of facilities in Europe and elsewhere which are reportedly able to replenish exempted vessels' halon systems, which can be accessed at http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D6617/25.pdf

Non - EU flagged vessels calling at EU destinations may still operate halon based fire-fighting systems onboard. But - except where the system is used for a critical purpose - they are no longer permitted to replenish halon supplies in European ports.



Chittagong tightens up on unlicensed tally checkers

Recent reports from Bangladesh emphasise the need for care by shipowners' agents in the appointment of contractors to perform outturn tallies during the discharge of bagged cargoes at Chittagong. Although the Chittagong Port Authority's regulations only allow the employment of licensed contractors, it seems that there have been a number of cases where tallies have been performed by companies without the necessary permits.

The local authorities or courts should attach some significance to the results of licensed tallies.



However, one consequence of a tally by an unlicensed contractor is that its findings will carry less influence - and so will be of less potential value to owners - in the event that cargo shortage claims arise.

● Also in Chittagong, the Mercantile Marine Department, in its capacity as Port State Control Inspector, now requires vessels calling at the port to submit a copy of their latest Port State Control inspection report together with other documentation, including details of the vessel's P&I club.

(Finlays, Chittagong)

US develops electronic arrival notice scheme

The National Vessel Movement Centre (NVMC) in the United States has developed a web interface for Electronic Notices of Arrival (E-NOA).

The E-NOA is an initiative designed to make notice of arrival submissions more efficient by allowing the direct importation of data into the NVMC's Ship Arrival Notification System database (SANS).

Previously, the only way in which data could be input into SANS was

by phone, fax or email.

The E-NOA aims to reduce the burden on ship operators by:

- Offering an easy-to-use method of submission.
- Allowing for previous E-NOA entries to be copied and used again for future submission, thereby saving time and effort.
- Providing those who make submissions with an electronic receipt acknowledging that the submission has been received by the NVMC.

The US Coast Guard reports that Customs and Border Protection has agreed to accept E-NOA as an authorised method for submission of its Advance Vessel and People information.

Details of how the agreement will be implemented are due for publication but, in the meantime, the USCG says the initiative represents a milestone in the development of one-stop-shopping for the submission of reports to different federal agencies in the US.

Technical details about E-NOA can be accessed at: www.nvmc.uscg.gov

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