



Hot work in tanks

HISTORY records that hot work in or near tanks that contain residues of combustible cargoes can have disastrous consequences. Sadly, these incidents are not confined to history, as they continue to happen all too frequently. Even when work is contracted to third parties, who employ approved chemists, deaths and serious injuries can, not only lead to substantial claims, but also have an adverse effect on the morale of those associated with the operation of the vessel. Final cleaning of spaces prior to hot work is often contracted out, as shadow sectors and ledges are inaccessible for ship's staff to hand-clean at sea.

Once scaffolding has been rigged for cleaning and hot work, it is strongly suggested that ship's staff verify that contractor's staff are carrying out necessary cleaning to all local areas, including adjacent tanks and areas where hot materials can splash or fall.

Ship's staff should also ensure that chemists thoroughly check for residues in the vicinity of the work, and test for gases in the entire tank and adjacent compartments. Ship's staff should also ensure that an effective fire watch is maintained close

to the hot work area and in adjacent spaces if the work is on or near a common boundary. Company procedures should take account of all this, as well as ISGOTT and the need to check any local rules for hot work.



Beware hot work in or near tanks.

Fumigant disposal

A Club vessel recently carried a cargo of barley from the UK to Aqaba, Jordan. Routine fumigation was carried out enroute by placing banks of plastic pouches of aluminium phosphide in the holds prior to departure. The pouches were expected to be removed by shore authorities at Aqaba, but the ship was directed to store the fumigant residues on deck in drums. The fumigant ignited in the high ambient temperatures and the fire could not be extinguished on deck. The master ordered it thrown overboard as only full immersion in water would allow the residues to burn off without risk. The local

authorities didn't see it that way. The master was arrested and the ship was detained, pending several court hearings, for alleged pollution.

A bank guarantee of \$86,000 was initially negotiated for clean-up expenses and fines, but \$107,000 cash security was later insisted upon. The \$88,000 penalty ultimately imposed is being disputed. Care is needed in handling, storing and disposing of fumigants. Members should ensure that their charter agreements cover the handling and disposal of such chemicals, making charterers liable for matters arising from incidents like this.

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Don't ignore the bilge alarm

TWO incidents have recently been reported to the Club where the failure of the crew on board a containership to react promptly to and properly investigate the cause of bilge alarm activation has resulted in partial flooding of holds and substantial cargo claims.

On one occasion, the bilge alarms were ignored as the crew assumed that they had simply been triggered by rainfall during loading and that there was therefore no immediate need to investigate further.

Only after a period of some fourteen hours did a visual inspection show water on

Chile and chips

THE US Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has introduced a regulation establishing requirements for the importation of woodchips into the United States from Chile. The woodchips must be treated with a specified pesticide prior to loading on the carrying vessel, and



Making assumptions about bilge alarm activation can put the vessel at risk

the tanktop to a height of about one metre.

In the second incident, the alarms were initially ignored. On further investigation, however, and following efforts to reduce the flooding, it became apparent that there were defects in the bilge valve, allowing the water level to continue to rise.

the shipment must also be accompanied by a certificate attesting to the proper pesticide treatment.

During shipments to the US, no other regulated articles - other than solid wood packing materials - are permitted in the holds or in sealed containers carrying the woodchips. Woodchips carried on deck must be in

Each and every bilge alarm signal must be investigated. Assumptions must not be made about the likely cause of alarm activation, as this may impact on the safety of the vessel and its cargo.

Crews should carefully log each incident, and record any action taken, to assist subsequent investigation.

sealed containers. For woodchips other than those in sealed containers, unloading must be carried out by a conveyor that is covered to prevent accidental spillage and to stop the chips from being blown by the wind.

Masters should not accept regulated cargoes without the required certification.

Slung cargo

THE practice of reusing rope slings on preslung shipments of steel to US ports is causing problems.

Slings from previous cargoes are often removed at the first discharge port and are thrown on deck. During the course of the coastwise voyage, they may be left and become sprayed with salt water.

When these slings are reused to lift a subsequent steel cargo, salt from the slings leaves deposits on the exposed parts as if seawater

Problems in Egypt

THERE has been a spate of vessel arrests in Egypt, and in particular the port of Suez, in respect of claims for unsettled invoices for supplies and/or services which have supposedly been provided to vessels. Although suppliers have submitted false invoices with apparently authentic signatures of ship's staff and the ship's stamp, in most instances the master has been unable to explain how these have been affixed to the invoice. In other cases, invoices have been completely



Recycling slings can cause problems

had leaked into the hold. This can damage sensitive steel cargo or it can give rise to existing damage being blamed on the ship because of a positive saline test, which would lead the courts forged. Suppliers and their lawyers have also ordered arrest of vessels as security.

The Club's correspondent in Alexandria, Eldib Advocates, has applied to the ministry of justice to have arrests limited to cases involving only known and established suppliers. It has also asked the ministry to support the creation of a system whereby arrested vessels can be released immediately upon submission of a bank guarantee.

Masters should not sign any blank papers, particularly while in the canal area, and

to believe that seawater ingress during the voyage was the cause. Ship's staff should be aware of this danger and ensure that rope cargo slings are washed or properly stowed.

should not leave any blank spaces above their signature on legitimate documents which they do sign.

● MEMBERS should also be aware that the Suez Canal Authority is the only organisation in Egypt which is authorised to take measures to protect the marine environment in the port of Suez, and to impose fines. Other agencies such as the Society Marine Environment Protection Committee are alleging that they are empowered to carry out such tasks.

From Russia with ... scrap

MEMBERS are alerted to procedures in operation at the Russian port of Novorossiisk for the loading of scrap cargoes.

Scrap cargoes currently being loaded at the port correspond to what is known locally as Class A3 or Standard A3. Such scrap must not include engine parts and oxygen bottles (unless dismantled/cut), pieces of concrete, stones, asbestos-coated pipes, and oily parts. Two methods of loading are used.

In the first, scrap cargoes are accumulated in a stack over a long period in open storage at the Central or Eastern dock. The ship then loads from this stack and, on completion of loading, onboard quantities are determined by draft survey.

In the second method of loading, cargo is delivered alongside by railway boxcars, and loaded directly from the wagons into the ship's hold. This method of loading is extremely slow.

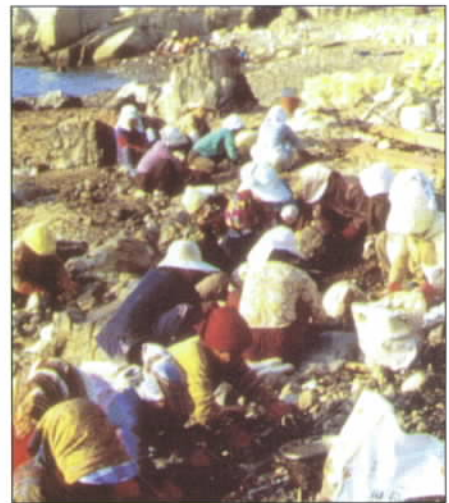
For example, it takes about a month to load 10,000 metric tons of scrap. The amount loaded is determined in the same way as in the first method of loading.

Generally, cargo delivered to the port is not tested against required quality standards by either the port or the cargo interests, so it is often not until after the cargo is actually on board that the master becomes aware of any discrepancy between what is on the ship and the standard set out in the load order, if the ship is actually contracted to load a specific grade of scrap.

It is very difficult for crews to maintain round-the-clock surveillance to prevent the loading of such admixtures, and to debate every single sling-load with stevedores and crane drivers.

Masters should ensure that any difference in the cargo from that required is to be reflected in the bill of lading description or additional clausings.

Arrangements for loading inspections and draft surveys can be made through local correspondents.



New ITOPF guide

THE International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited (ITOPF) has published a new handbook containing expanded and/or updated information on a variety of topics.

Up-to-date information is included on compensation for oil spills, on the status of international conventions, on oil spill statistics, and on ITOPF staff.

There are also a number of new sections, on the effects of marine oil spills, the Oil Pollution Act 1990, and the OPRC Convention.

Copies of the handbook can be obtained from Sarah Leach at ITOPF on: Tel +44 (0) 20 7621 1255, or fax +44 (0) 20 7621 1783.

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