



A timely reminder on ventilation practice



Proper ventilation and stowage are vital to the safe carriage of bagged cargoes

AN analysis of recent claims trends by the Club suggests that a reminder may be due that correct ventilation of the cargo holds is essential in the proper care of sensitive, hygroscopic cargoes such as bagged rice and cocoa beans.

Large amounts of moisture can be released into the hold atmosphere by such cargoes and, in certain conditions, high humidity levels can lead to formation of condensation (commonly referred to as "ship's

sweat") on the vessel's structure. Damage to the cargo often results if the bags come into contact with that condensation. The formation of this ship's sweat can be minimised by correctly ventilating the holds.

In order to ascertain whether ventilating the holds with outside air is appropriate, ship's officers must compare the dew point of the air inside the hold with the dew point of the external air.

If the sea conditions are suitable and the dew point of the external air is lower than that of the hold air, then the holds should be ventilated. Conversely, the vessel's holds should not be ventilated if the dew point of the external air is higher than that of the air in the hold.

Dew points are calculated using a hygrometer and a dew point table such as that produced in *The Mariner's Handbook*.

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The dew point for each hold should be calculated using hygrometer readings taken inside the hold or, possibly, in the flow of air from an exhaust vent from the hold.

The windward bridge wing is generally a suitable position from which to take the readings necessary for the calculation of the dew point of the external atmosphere.

The dew point comparisons should be made frequently, say once every four hours, conditions permitting, throughout the voyage and the ventilation should be adjusted in accordance with the outcome of those regular comparisons.

A detailed record of all ventilation carried out during the voyage should be kept in the logbooks for future reference.

California Block Stow warning



Designed for quick discharge - but is it safe?

The attention of Club members is drawn to a controversial method of stowage which has been

developed in order to help minimise stevedore costs when carrying semi-finished steel slabs. The California Block Stow is designed so that slabs can be discharged quickly using large gantry cranes. While it may be well-suited to vessels with box-shaped holds, the Club is not persuaded that this type of stow can be safely used in self-trimming bulk carriers.

The simplest form of the bulk carrier version of this stow is constructed as follows:

- The slabs are stowed fore and aft with the outboard edge of each outboard slab in the bottom tier in contact with the intersection of the tank top and the sloping wing tank plating.
- Subsequent tiers are built into a block with a

rectangular cross-section. The spaces between the upper and lower wing tanks are left void so that the block is, in effect, a free-standing tower.

- The top three tiers are lashed together to form a "cap".
- Between the bottom tier and the cap, the block is held together solely by the frictional bond between the slabs and the wooden dunnage that is laid between each tier.

Given the potential for the slabs to shift, members should be aware of the dangers in the event that use of California Block Stow is proposed, either during fixture negotiations or prior to loading slabs.

Lifejacket alert

THE UK Maritime and Coast Guard Agency (MCA) has withdrawn type approval for Canepa and Campi "Artica" lifejackets following an investigation into the accident to the Norwegian high-speed passenger ferry *Sleipner* in November last year. The Norwegian Maritime Directorate banned the use

of the Artica lifejackets on Norwegian-registered ships in the wake of the accident. The lifejackets, produced by the Italian company Canepa & Campi, were at the time in question marked "DoT approved".

The MCA then carried out its own operational tests, which have resulted in the type approval certificate being withdrawn. The tests revealed difficulty in correctly donning the lifejackets

without instruction, serious concerns about the ability of the lifejacket to right an unconscious casualty lying face-down in the water, and the ability of the lifejacket to achieve minimum mouth clearance above water.

Members with this type of lifejacket should contact the flag state authority for advice or take appropriate action to ensure that their lifejackets are suitable for use.

Shipboard fires warning

IT is now thought that the number of shipboard fires which may be attributable to the carriage of calcium hypochlorite is higher than was previously widely understood, and that IMDG Code requirements for the carriage of this cargo are inadequate.

The International Group of P&I Clubs has issued interim recommendations for the carriage of these cargoes (UN 1748, 2208 and 2880), which have already been circulated to members in Club circular number 5:286, and further details can be obtained from the Club's website. Club members are reminded that, in addition to the



The number of CH-related ship fires is greater than previously thought

recommendations, care should be taken at all times with the dangerous goods declarations for these cargoes if they are giving description, packaging, labelling and transport

conditions "in accordance with applicable regulations" because they will relate to the suspect entry in the IMDG Code and not to the International Group of P&I Club recommendations

Questionable quality

TWO of the Club's members have recently had severe difficulties in relation to oil cargo descriptions in bills of lading leading to difficulty liening cargo to enforce freight/demurrage claims.

All tanker members are urged to be on the look-out for proposed fixtures which include some or all of the following features:

- charterers without a well-established track record
- loading and/or discharge of

cargo from ship to ship, and possibly outside territorial waters

- terms in charter parties which purport to entitle charterers to have replacement bills of lading issued

- cargoes destined for China and possibly also requests to blend cargoes loaded in ports far removed from each other.

Of course members in both wet and dry trades should always be wary of unproven charterers. Some members still

agree to accept charter indemnities in exchange for delivery of cargo without production of bills of lading from charterers who are most unlikely to have the resources to honour them.

Questionable charterers are more likely to be associated with marginal oil trading, so the risks of a multi-million dollar liability for delivery without a bill of lading are so much greater. P&I cover excludes such liability.

Conspiracy to defraud?

THE number of unusual and indeed potentially dangerous requests for doubtful information to be inserted into bills of lading seems to be on the increase. A Club member recently time-chartered a bulk carrier for a trip to Europe. Upon completion of loading, the charterers asked the owners to have the mate's receipts issued showing a discharge port in a neighbouring country, which conflicted with voyage instructions already issued.

The most likely explanation for this seems to be that the exporters were trying either to avoid regulations or else to fraudulently obtain export subsidies in the country of loading. If the owners had co-operated with charterers to commit such offences, the vessel might very well have been at risk of seizure, if they were discovered.

In such circumstances, there is no absolute right of Club cover, and it is possible that the master and other members of the

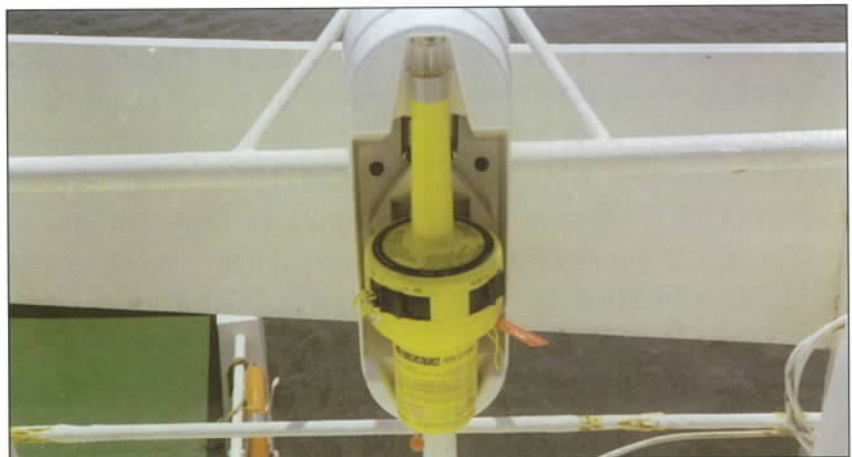
crew might very well have been imprisoned.

The Club is increasingly being consulted by members over potentially dangerous demands for inappropriate representations in bulk cargo bills of lading.

It is important to remember that any charter party clause which limits owners' rights to insist that bills of lading are issued properly should be avoided. And owners must be on the alert for features of the cargo, the trade or the

voyage which appear to be misrepresented in the bills of lading or mate's receipts.

In the instance referred to above, the owners correctly declined to issue the mate's receipts in the misleading form demanded, and the charterers were forced to agree that they would have to be issued properly.



Distressing news

OPERATING or testing errors of Digital Selective Calling equipment and Electronic Position Indicating Radio Beacons (*above*) can result in false distress signals being transmitted which cause problems and impose a burden on rescue co-ordination

centres and search & rescue services. They use up valuable resources and can cause life-threatening delays when real emergencies arise. So it is essential that all relevant ships staff can correctly operate, test and clean any radio equipment capable of transmitting an automated distress signal.

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