



Warning signals

WARNINGS, no matter how explicit in nature and intent, are sometimes not enough when it comes to trying to effect the safe carriage of goods by sea. A case recently handled by the Club, involving an unusual heavy lift, illustrates the point. It resulted in damage to both vessel and cargo.

A member's vessel was alongside at Lae, Papua New Guinea, to discharge cargo, including two Caterpillar articulated dump trucks. During unloading, one of the trucks was dropped back into the vessel's cargo hold, onto the after-end of the other

truck, from where it rolled off onto the hold tanktop.

It was subsequently found that the eye plate on the after-end of the lifting spreader had fractured, releasing the sling to the cargo hook. In turn, the forward lifting devices attached to the truck's chassis beneath the engine were torn out, and the truck fell to the bottom of the cargo hold.

The stevedores failed to observe warnings clearly displayed on the truck to clamp the two sections of the body. This, however, was only a contributing cause to the accident. The design of the trucks themselves was a substantial factor. The lifting lugs on the front end of the

trucks were seemingly too close together, rather than being located closer to the corners. This made it very difficult to lift the trucks without the front sections trying to turn.

Despite this design fault, however, the case illustrates the need for stevedores to exercise great care when slinging unusual heavy lifts.

ISM code alert

THE Club continues to help members to meet criteria and implementation dates for ISM code accreditation. The Club fully supports the code, and members must be aware that failure to achieve accreditation by due dates will result in severe disruption of their trading patterns. The Club has also become aware that some owners have been caught out by consultants selling off-the-peg systems which do not meet their individual requirements for achieving ISM accreditation. Members are warned to ensure that any consultants they employ have a proven track record and the ability to tailor systems to meet their individual requirements.



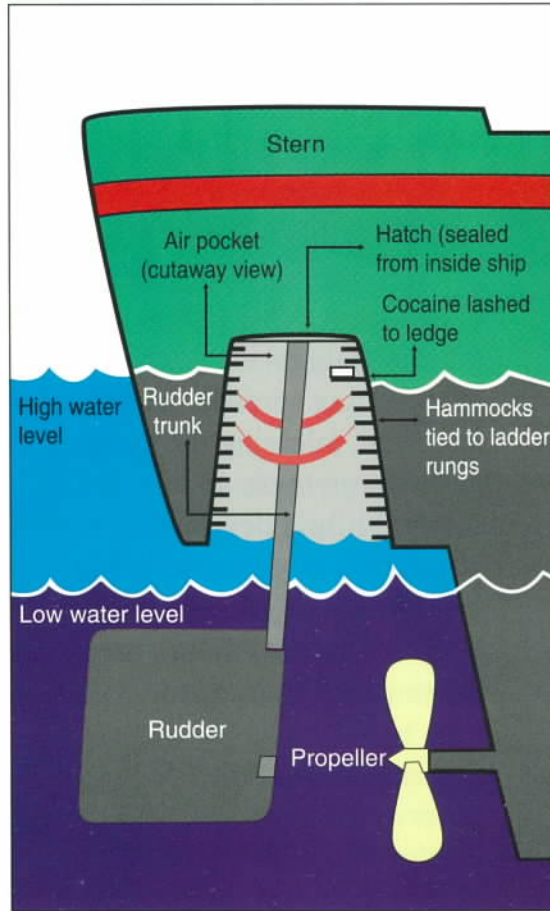
Stashing away

STOWAWAYS and smuggling continue to be a source of frustration and expense to P&I clubs. One London Club member discovered this to its cost recently after its vessel was detained in New York in an incident which produced a local newspaper headline which proclaimed, "Two Stashaways Busted, Cops Say". The vessel was enroute from Colombia to the United States - a heady combination these days. But although the headline is of the only-in-America variety, the incident itself should serve as a warning to owners everywhere.

The vessel sailed from Mamanol, Colombia, for New York with a cargo of fuel oil. When it anchored in New York, US customs officers boarded to conduct a thorough search, prompted by the fact that the vessel's voyage had originated in Columbia.

Shortly after the search began, the customs officers found two wet-suited stowaways in the rudder post compartment, together with a duffel bag containing forty-three packages of cocaine valued at more than a million dollars. The two men - both Colombians - are now awaiting prosecution and

possible deportation under federal drug importation statutes in the United States.



The rudder post manhole had not been opened for almost eighteen months. But while the vessel was at Mamanol the rudder post compartment opening was out of the water and accessible by anybody standing on the rudder and

climbing through a 3ft by 6ft opening. As the vessel loaded, the opening sank below the waterline so that it was

possible to enter the compartment under water without being observed.

The Customs Authorities recommended that the vessel should not be fined or detained because the crew co-operated fully with the customs investigation. However, the US Immigration and Naturalisation Service did detain the crew on board in order to complete its investigations.

Meanwhile, the owner of the vessel will remain responsible for the cost of repatriating the two Colombians if and when they are deported.

The incident must serve as a reminder to all owners that, even if they conduct a thorough search of their vessels, they must remain vigilant at all times to the possibility of stowaways gaining access by unconventional means.

Greek office changes

AFTER five years' service in the Piraeus office of A Bilbrough & Co - the last two of these as manager - Martyn Hughes is to leave Greece in July 1997 to return to Bilbrough's London office. Ian Gooch, who has been with the company for

six years, will be appointed manager of the Piraeus office in succession to Martyn. John Warman, an ex-seafarer who is presently working with Greek members in the London office, will move to Greece and start serving in the Piraeus office upon Martyn's return to London.

Monitoring safe coal carriage



IMO has completed its research into procedures for monitoring carbon monoxide as a means of detecting the spontaneous heating of coal. Amendments to the Solid Bulk Cargoes Code have accordingly been issued in a supplement to the 1994 edition.

The amendments state that a means should be provided - which does not require entry into the cargo space - for testing the atmosphere, during loading and during the course of the voyage, in the space above coal cargoes. The revised entry contains a diagram showing a suitable arrangement. The code also emphasises that crews should be trained in the proper use of instruments which coal-carrying ships are required to carry in order to measure temperature and atmosphere.

It is obviously important for ships to be provided with the relevant test equipment and for seafarers to receive the appropriate training before monitoring begins. Information

relating to test equipment may be obtained from the Club.

The code re-emphasises that, prior to loading, the shipper or its appointed agent should provide in writing to the master the characteristics of the cargo together with the recommended safe handling for loading and transport of the cargo. As a minimum, the cargo's contract specifications for moisture and sulphur content, and size, should be stated, especially where the cargo may be liable to emit methane or to self-heat.

A new entry in the code details the monitoring procedures which should be provided, together with procedures for the testing of equipment. The frequency of



testing will depend on the information provided by the shipper and the results of the analysis of the atmosphere in the cargo space. A rise in levels of carbon monoxide may indicate a potential heating problem, and expert advice should be obtained. Full details of the revised code can be obtained from the IMO, or members can contact Derek Avenell at Bilbrough's for help and advice.

In ballast

NEW regulations were introduced with effect from January 1 this year for tankers calling at Saudi Aramco terminals to ensure that all clean ballast discharge is monitored by oil discharging equipment.

Where such monitoring can't be implemented, ballast tank final residues will be kept on board as a precaution against pollution. Additionally, masters will be required to

give a deballasting written statement of the quantity of clean ballast to be retained on board.

The new regulations also require that a crew member must be stationed so as to be able to monitor the ballast discharge visually.

Any violation of these regulations will result in the imposition of penalties, which will depend upon the extent of any pollution which may result.

Charter problems put owners at risk

THE Club has received reports in the past few months of a number of charter parties which have run into serious difficulties, mainly as a result of depressed freight rates.

The effect of these failures is that shipowners have not received their freight or hire under charter parties and have been forced to suspend the vessel's voyage pending resolution of the problems.

It is vital that, before fixing, shipowners, charterers and cargo owners make due diligence checks into the track records of the partners they intend dealing with.

Members do seek the Club's help in trying to avoid or minimise the consequences of default by charterers. Financial losses of this sort are not usually insurable, but the Club can, where appropriate, help members by providing legal advice, liening subfreights and resisting wrongful arrest.

Members are also reminded that the Club has a block

membership with the London-based International Maritime Bureau, which specialises in the investigation of maritime crime, and particularly fraud. The IMB has built up a comprehensive database of companies involved in international trading, which includes details of any known criminal activity and of the history, general performance and creditworthiness of individual companies. This database is available directly to all members of the Club. Members can contact the IMB themselves with details of a company they wish to have investigated.

Members are urged to make full use of this facility to check the past performance and creditworthiness of any prospective charterers. By making prudent enquiries of this sort, members are not only protecting the position of the Club but are also contributing to the effectiveness of the IMB's chartering experience programme.

The IMB can be contacted on
Tel: +44 (0)181 591 3000
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What's wrong with this ladder?

THE first rung on the ladder to so many accidents at sea is often an avoidable action by a doubtless well-meaning member of the ship's crew.

Our photograph shows a ladder which was offered to a US stevedore by the crew of a member's vessel. The ladder had no rubber feet, which is why it slipped, dropping the stevedore as he tried to climb out of a hold where he had been lashing a container.

The man was not badly hurt, but the incident nevertheless produced a claim of more than \$85,000.

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