The London P&I Club

STOP Loss

JANUARY 2014 | ISSUE 62

Fresh fears over liquefaction

The lifting of an iron ore ban in India and the recent total loss of two ships have put the spotlight once again on the problem of liquefaction.

The ban on the mining, storage and export of iron ore was imposed in the Indian state of Goa during October 2012 following reports of "irregularities". There are specific challenges involved in the export of iron ore fines from Indian ports during the monsoon season which can increase the moisture content of the cargo to levels where liquefaction can occur, resulting in a severe loss of a ship's stability and sometimes sinkings. Other cargoes such as nickel ore are also prone to liquefaction.

Last month, the Supreme Court lifted the ban in Goa to allow the e-auctioning of 11.5m tonnes of excavated iron ore which has been lying unused since the ban was introduced. The process will be supervised by a committee set up by the court. A separate committee was also appointed to advise on how much iron ore can be extracted each year, and it is due to report its recommendations in less than two months, by 15 February 2014. It is likely that there will be an increase in iron ore loadings from that region.

There have also been total losses in recent months of a ship carrying Indian iron ore fines and a second carrying nickel ore. Investigations in both cases are at their early stages to establish precisely the cause of the sinkings. There are currently no links between these incidents and the cargoes onboard. StopLoss has reported several times on the dangers of cargo liquefaction (see www.londonpandi.com StopLoss issues 54, 56, 58, and 59, for example) particularly concerning iron ore fines and nickel ore in

locations including India, Sierra Leone, Guatemala, Indonesia and the Philippines. Incidents have included the loss of 44 lives when three bulk carriers sank in October and November 2010 while carrying nickel ore from Indonesia to China.

We have also explained the great care that must be taken when handling these cargoes and the rules governing them under the IMSBC Code. Ships can be offered cargo which is unsafe due to the moisture content being above the Transportable Moisture Limit. This can lead to the liquefaction of the materials, and is a particular problem in certain locations, such as parts of India when the cargoes are exposed to monsoon rain.

Members considering carrying iron ore fines or nickel ore are strongly advised to contact the Club early on, before concluding a fixture, to ensure that the risks and associated precautions are fully explored.

Dangers of sole night lookout

The UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch provides a timely reminder about the dangers of keeping a single lookout on the bridge at night:

The December 2013 MAIB report into the grounding of the general cargo ship *Fri Ocean* has highlighted the contribution that having the OOW as the sole lookout on the bridge at night may have made to a grounding incident.

"The STCW states that the OOW may be the sole lookout in daylight provided 'the situation has been carefully assessed and it has been established without doubt that it is safe to do so, full account has been taken of all relevant factors…and assistance is immediately available to be summoned to the bridge when any change in the situation so requires'. Most Flag administrations understand from this that at all times when a vessel is underway at night, a separate dedicated lookout is required in addition to the OOW."

The ship had loaded a cargo of wood chip in Corpach, Scotland, and was en route to Varberg in Sweden. The planned route took her through the Sound of Mull where the incident occurred about 2.5 miles south of Tobermory. The ship went aground at 03:22 having overshot a planned course alteration by 2.5 miles at a speed of 10.5 knots; the OOW having fallen asleep.

The report concludes that (along with other potential contributing factors such as fatigue and the possibility that the BNWAS – Bridge Navigational Watch Alert System – was not in use) the absence of a dedicated lookout on the bridge removed a 'valuable control measure' in that the OOW may not have fallen asleep if he was not alone on the bridge; and that if he had, the lookout would have been able to wake him.

The full report is available on the MAIB website at: http://www.maib.gov.uk/cms_resources.cfm?file=/FriOcean_Report.pdf

IN THIS ISSUE

MALARIA

Malaria is a life-threatening disease to which seafarers are particularly at risk due to the very nature of their employment. Malaria is prevalent in tropical and sub-tropical zones around the world, with the majority of cases occurring in sub-Saharan Africa.

According to latest World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates, there were about 219 million cases of malaria in 2010, resulting in an estimated 660,000 deaths. The London P&I Club continues to handle a significant number of claims relating to serious illness and death of seafarers who have contracted malaria, with one recent case resulting in a costs exposure of about US$300,000.

Malaria is transmitted by the Anopheles mosquito, which carries the Plasmodium parasite. When an Anopheles mosquito bites a person and injects the malaria parasites into the blood, the parasites multiply in the liver and infect red blood cells.

From the time an individual is bitten by a mosquito carrying the plasmodium parasite, malaria will develop in seven to 21 days (incubation period). The first symptoms – fever, headache, chills and vomiting – may be mild and difficult to recognise as malaria.

If not treated promptly, the disease can progress to severe illness often leading to death. It is for this reason that malaria poses a greater risk for seafarers if symptoms manifest themselves at sea, remote from shore-based medical facilities.

Prevention

The WHO recommends the use of oral anti-malarial medication (chemoprophylaxis), which is usually to be taken in advance of entering high risk areas. Various anti-malaria drugs are available, the choice of which will depend upon a number of factors, including the geographic location, locally drug resistant strains of malaria and expected period of exposure. Ships that could potentially enter malarial endemic areas must carry onboard an adequate stock of anti-malaria medication for prophylaxis of the crew and treatment where necessary. It is recommended that medical advice be sought when deciding the type of drug, quantity, combination of medication, dosage and time frame (prior to arrival, during stay and following departure from the malarial region). Risk awareness and forward planning by ship managers and crew is therefore of vital importance to ensure timely implementation of precautions.

A log of all anti-malarial drugs administered to and taken by individual crew members should be maintained.

Other practical preventative measures include encouraging crew members to dress so as to restrict exposure of bare skin, application of insect repellents and keeping accommodation closed down, particularly between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

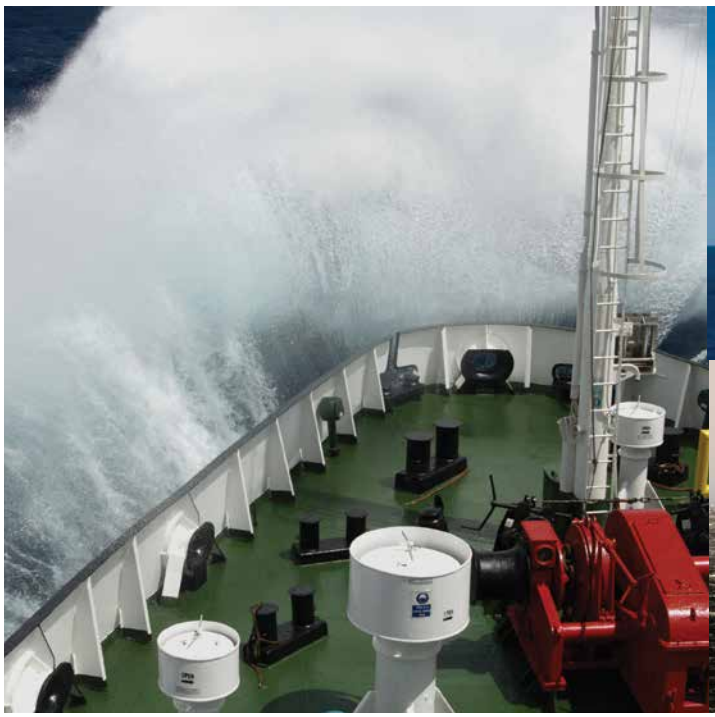
Both the WHO and the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) provide comprehensive information and guidance, which may be accessed at the following links:

http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/

http://www.who.int/topics/malaria/en/

In the event of any crew members appearing to present symptoms, or if in any doubt, Members are advised to seek urgent professional medical advice and inform the Club immediately.

T&P Notices and Navigational / Safety Warnings



The London P&I Club's Ship Inspection Programme considers many aspects of an entered ship's operation, including that of Section #2 Safety of Navigation. In the last year, the department has noted a rise in the number of deficiencies related to Temporary and Preliminary Notices, and at the same time, the increasing frequency of negative findings related to the management of Radio Navigation and Meteorological Warnings via Navtex, and Sat – C SafetyNET. The most commonly recorded finding relating to T&P Notices is that T&P Notices are not managed or applied to the chart folio.

An assessment of the latest voyage charts could confirm to a surveyor whether or not T&P Notices are being applied to the chart folio; and if not consistently applied, this can deprive the ship's Navigating Officer and Officers of the Watch of valuable passage planning information. It should be noted that T&P notices can vary greatly in content, but may include information about the location and duration of subsurface operations such as pipe/cable laying or offshore oil and gas exploration. Other information regarding temporary location of buoyage and/or berth closures are amongst the vast array of information types available which may influence the planning or conduct of a passage. Efficient passage planning requires the assimilation of good quality information which ought to leave the mariner better equipped to decide how to conduct the passage his ship.

A further finding, which can often accompany a finding in relation to T&P Notices, relates to the management of Navigation/Meteorological Warnings. Commonly, such findings refer to a lack of observation of these navigation warnings and/or a system by which that information is collected, applied and displayed for watch keeping officers to monitor. Equipment deficiency is also a common cause for a negative finding. It was a lack of observation of the meteorological information which was being provided by the Navtex system on the bridge of an entered ship which contributed greatly to a significant oil spill claim recently. On the bridge of the anchored ship, the Navtex equipment was fully operational and properly set for the coast Navtex stations in the area. Unfortunately, there was no established system by which the information, navigational or meteorological, was read, considered and applied on the bridge. Despite being the Northern-hemisphere summer, heavy weather was forecasted by various means including Navtex; but was quite unexpected at that time of year. By the time the poor weather struck, it caught the bridge team by surprise in the early hours of the morning. In the time that it took to get the main engine on-line, the ship had dragged her anchor approximately one nautical mile onto a rocky shoreline, puncturing her bunker tanks. The resultant spill clean-up and associated claims ran in excess of US$44m.

Officers should be reminded of the full extent of the chart and publication folio to which corrections apply; and be reminded of the risks of ignoring sources of Navigational and Meteorological information.

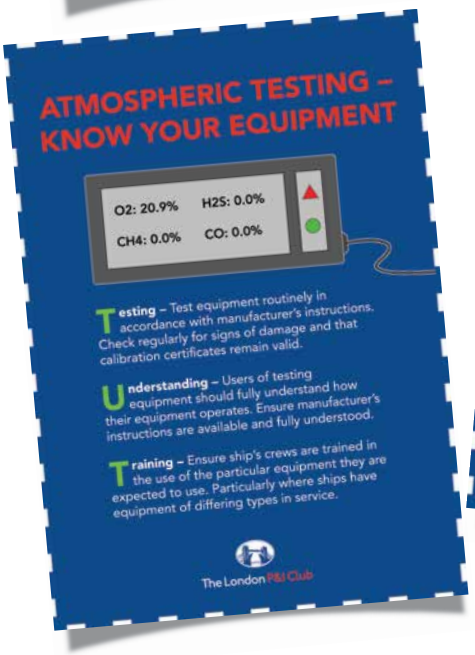
London P&I Club Safety Poster Range

The Club is delighted to announce the release of a range of three safety posters, which will be making their way to Members over the coming weeks.

The posters reflect prominent safety themes and are intended to catch the mariner's attention and help instil good basic operational practices onboard.

The three A3 sized posters on the subjects of fire drills, movement around the ship and gas detection meters will be available in English, Mandarin and Vietnamese languages.

The Club will be in touch with all Members soon to establish their individual requirements for hard copies which will be distributed by mail in due course.



If you would like more hard copies of StopLoss in the future, or more colleagues to receive the link to the online version, please email us your details at: stoploss@londonpandi.com

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION WORLD ROUND-UP

In this regular column, we round up some of the eye-catching accident investigation reports from around the globe:

***Arklow Meadow* MAIB – United Kingdom**
An investigation into the release of phosphine gas from fumigant socks during cargo discharge. The report provides an insight into the importance of ship's crew familiarity with procedures for the handling of fumigants onboard ship.
Click here to view report.

***Mell Selarang* ATSB – Australia**
An investigation into the serious injury of a seaman who was moving around a hatch coaming while greasing the hatch cover landing pads; when he slipped and fell on to the top of a container in a cargo hold. This incident highlights the fact that seemingly simple tasks that are undertaken with the best of intentions often have the planning and risk assessment stages inadvertently overlooked.
Click here to view report.

***E. R Stralsund* FBMCI – Germany**
An investigation into the fatality of a seaman in the engine room. The report highlights the dangers of improper securing arrangements for heavy materials at sea.
Click here to view report.

***Sage Sagittarius* – JTSB Japan**
An investigation into the death of a company superintendent in a ship's self discharge equipment during the discharge of coal.
Click here to view report.

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