



Mariupol: Loading Bulk Sulphur Cargoes

The Club's correspondents in Mariupol, Azovloyd Pandi Services Limited, have drawn the Managers' attention to issues relating to powdered sulphur cargoes at the port of Mariupol, Ukraine

The Code of Safe Practice for Solid Bulk Cargoes (BC Code) draws attention to the risk of dust explosions when loading sulphur in bulk. Rather than handling this commodity carefully it would appear that stevedores in Mariupol may open the grabs high above the surface of the cargo, significantly increasing the amount of dust in the holds.

Similarly, in the absence of mechanical ventilation it is customary for sulphur dust levels to be controlled by spraying fresh water on to the cargo and within the holds. However, it is reported that stevedores in Mariupol are using sea water from the vessel's fire main for this purpose. Since sea water in the port of Mariupol is brackish rather than fresh, this practice may introduce chlorides to the cargo which, in turn, may lead to contamination claims. Bulk sulphur containing chlorides is also highly corrosive to steel when wet.

It is also important to note that although sulphur is listed in Appendix B of the BC Code as a material which possesses chemical hazards, it would appear that the shippers do not always provide the vessel with the necessary cargo information or documentation prior to loading, contrary to the requirements of SOLAS Ch.VI, Reg 2.

Recommendations for vessels due to load sulphur in Mariupol are as follows:

1. Members should ensure that the Master is provided with a copy of the BC Code entry for sulphur;
2. Full details of the cargo and all supporting documentation should be obtained from the shipper before loading commences;
3. The Master should issue a formal letter to both the stevedores and the shippers prior to loading stating that:
 - a. the cargo is to be loaded strictly in accordance with the BC Code;
 - b. grabs are not to be opened at a height greater than one metre above the surface of the cargo in order to minimise the amount of sulphur dust;
 - c. only fresh water is to be used for spraying; and
 - d. the addressees will be held liable for any claims which may arise due to their failure to comply with the above.
4. The Master should ensure that the stevedores are monitored closely throughout and if it is found that the stevedores are not loading in accordance with the formal letter issued by the Master our local correspondents should be contacted for assistance.

Members requiring further information should contact the Association's Loss Prevention department.

Yours faithfully
Assurance Foreningen Ltd

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