



Solid Bulk Cargoes

The purpose of this Information Sheet is to advise all ship owners, operators, shippers and terminal operators of the requirements in Australia for the safe carriage of solid bulk cargoes. This information sheet is to enhance and clarify any issues with the BC/IMSBC Code and Marine Order Part 34, and provides additional guidance

Bulk Cargo Shipping Name (BCSN)

The BCSN identifies a bulk cargo for transport at sea and relates that cargo to the relevant carriage requirements provided in the individual schedules that allow the cargo to be carried safely. The shipper is required to provide appropriate information about the cargo to be shipped (see IMSBC section 4.2) and it is essential that this relevant to the physical and chemical properties of the actual cargo, as opposed to something that is close. This information is required to be to the Master for each shipment as a shipper's declaration as described in 4.2.3 of the IMSBC code.



Additionally, Masters are reminded of their obligations under Marine Orders Part 34 provision 8.1.3 (a penal provision) which states that they are not permitted to allow loading to commence until the shipper provides information in accordance with provision 8.1.1.



Tripartite agreement

With the introduction of the IMSBC code internationally on 1 January 2011, cargoes that are not covered, or adequately addressed, in the Code will require a tripartite agreement in order to ship the product under section 1.3.1.1 of the IMSBC code. The agreement will be required from the Port state of loading, the Flag state of the ship and the port state of receiving the cargo.

Any Competent authority that issued the certificate for carriage of a cargo not covered in the code is required to submit this to the IMO within one year to incorporate this solid bulk cargo into the code.

Oxygen Depleting Cargoes

The IMSBC Code in Section 3 "Safety of personnel and ship" requires all necessary precautions are observed. This includes Cargoes which are liable to cause oxygen depletion in a cargo space.

One area of concern regards timber products. At the dangerous goods and solid cargo and container subcommittee (DSC 14) in 2009, Sweden prepared a paper regarding an addition to the IMSBC code of timber products (Logs) due to a number of incidents that had occurred in their ports. This paper was supported to include "Wood Products General" in the next edition of the IMSBC code with associated BCSN of :

- Logs
- Pulpwood
- Timber
- Roundwood
- Saw logs

With the review of the IMSBC code at DSC 15 and the associated changes that will not come into force until 2013, The risks associated with the loading/unloading and transportation of seemingly harmless cargo, such as wood and other general wood products it is important that resolution A.864(20) – Recommendations for entering enclosed spaces aboard ships Is taken into account before entry to a cargo hold.

Liquefaction (TML)

Industry may be aware of recent incidents involving the liquefaction of solid bulk cargoes in Australia and internationally that have resulted in a reduction or loss of vessel stability whilst on passage. Loss of stability can be severe and in certain weather conditions may cause the vessel to capsize.

Recently in Australia a vessel was loaded with a cargo of concentrate with moisture content exceeding the Transportable Moisture Limit (TML). Initial tests of the covered stockpile indicated that the concentrate was just within its TML, however the concentrate was exposed to additional moisture from inclement weather and a water spray dust suppression system employed during loading.

As should be the case given these circumstances, the shipper took “in-line” samples whilst the vessel was being loaded. The results of the tests revealed that the TML had been exceeded. However as these results were not available until sometime after loading was complete corrective action required both prior to and during loading were not identified.

All involved in the loading, stowage and shipment of solid cargoes are reminded of their statutory obligations under MO Part 34. Provision 8.1.1 requires that the shipper provide to the Master information concerning cargo characteristics, including the TML and a certificate of moisture content.

Directions on measuring, sampling and monitoring for the TML can be found in the IMSBC Code. Specifically, Section 4 of the code gives direction on sampling and testing procedures and documentation that must be provided to the Master, Section 7 gives direction on cargoes that may liquefy and Section 8 and Appendix 2 gives direction on test procedures of cargoes that may liquefy.

It should be noted that, in contrast with its superseded editions, the current IMSBC Code does not nominate a TML for individual products but requires the shipper to establish the value for the shipped substance according to specified test procedures.

It is recommended that shippers review their procedures to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to provide the Master with accurate information at the time of loading. This is particularly important and mandatory for cargoes liable to liquefy.

