

The Safe Loading, Stowage and Shipment of Solid Bulk Cargoes

The purpose of this marine notice is to highlight to all those involved in the shipment of bulk cargoes (in particular the shippers) the risks associated with the loading, stowage and shipment of solid bulk cargoes and to reinforce obligations under Marine Orders (MO) Part 34 - Solid bulk cargoes.

MO Part 34 is mandatory for Australian registered vessels and for foreign vessels within Australian territorial waters, ports, or internal waters. It gives effect to the *Safety Of Life At Sea* (SOLAS) convention, Chapter VI (carriage of cargoes) and Chapter VII (carriage of dangerous goods) and the *Code of Safe Practice for Solid Bulk Cargoes, 2004* (BC Code).

The BC Code provides direction on the standards to be applied in the safe loading, stowage and shipment of solid bulk cargoes. The BC Code was developed by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and is referenced by SOLAS Chapter VI.

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 the moisture content.

Directions on measuring, sampling and monitoring for the TML can be found in the BC 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 BC 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.



Additionally, Masters are reminded of their obligations under 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.

Shippers and Masters are also reminded that routine ship inspections by AMSA surveyors will be conducted to verify compliance with provisions of MO Part 34, including shipper declared information and vessel loading and stowage plans. Additionally, shippers and Masters are advised that MO Part 34 allows for AMSA to take action in regard to unsafe or inadequate cargo arrangements. These may require corrective actions before the vessel can proceed to sea, or may include criminal prosecution for identified breaches.

Marine Orders Part 34 Solid bulk cargoes is available from the AMSA website at www.amsa.gov.au

Enquiries regarding the purchase of the BC Code (IMO publication ID260E) can be made to:

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