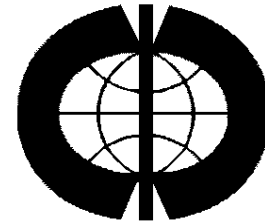


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Dry Bulk Shipowners, Cargo Interests and the Environment to Benefit from IMO Decision on Reception Facilities

Shipowners pleas for greater clarity on what to do when there are no adequate port reception facilities to receive residues including Hold Washing Water (HWW) from cargoes deemed "Harmful to the Marine Environment" (HME), have been substantially answered after an important decision at the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee held on 13-17 May.

With effect from 1 January 2013, shippers and shipowners faced difficulties in meeting the requirements of the amended MARPOL Annex V regulations which entered into force on that day without knowing whether there were suitable facilities to process the dry residues and HWW at the receiving port.

Compounded by the fact that a few shippers did not realise that the IMO had clarified in Circular MEPC.1/Circ 791 that they had to declare whether a commodity was HME or not with immediate effect, albeit with some flexibility on the criteria used to define HME until the end of 2014, many shippers and owners were left confused as to how to comply with the regulations.

However, this is set to change after Governments at the IMO meeting considered representations from Intercargo – the Dry Bulk Shipowners Association and supported by other Round Table Shipowners Associations and concerned Flag and Port States, which identified the scale of the problem and suggested a pragmatic interim solution.

Delegates had considered evidence of shortcomings in a representative sample of countries receiving dry bulk shipments and with information from the International Council of Mining and Metals (ICMM), were left in no doubt that the difficulties in meeting the regulatory requirements were genuine.

IMO will now send an official Circular to Industry providing shipowners / operators with some flexibility and clear guidance on procedures to be adopted when encountering a lack of adequate port reception facilities for HWW. This will state that, until 31 December 2015, HWW from holds previously containing solid bulk cargoes classified as HME, may be discharged outside Special Areas, providing :

1. Based on the information from the receiving port, the Master determines that there are no adequate reception facilities at the receiving terminal or at the next port of call;
2. The ship is en-route and as far as practicable but at least 12 nautical miles from the nearest land;
3. Before washing, solid bulk cargo residues are removed (and bagged for discharge ashore) as far as practicable, and the holds swept;
4. Filters are used in the bilge wells to collect any remaining solid particles and to minimize solid residue discharge; and
5. The discharge is recorded in the Garbage Record Book with the Flag State notified utilizing the *Revised Consolidated Format for Reporting Alleged Inadequacies of Port Reception Facilities (MEPC.1 / Circ 469 / Rev 2)*

Parties to the MARPOL Annex V Convention were urged to ensure the provision of adequate port reception facilities including HWW and the residues. Shippers within the jurisdiction of those states must also provide complete and accurate cargo declarations in accordance with MARPOL Annex V (and circular MEPC.1 / Circ 791) and Section 4 of the IMSBC Code.

Speaking after the conclusion of the IMO meeting, Intercargo's Technical Manager, Mr Ian Harrison said :-

"The decision reached is good for IMO and Industry in that it defines clear responsibilities, provides clarity for ships so that they will not fall foul of inadvertent MARPOL transgressions and otherwise creates an internationally appropriate, environmentally responsible and pragmatic solution to a very real problem.

We must remember that this is an interim solution. Shippers, ports and terminals must continue to strive for full compliance with the MARPOL Annex V requirements. Declarations should be accurate and proper port reception facilities should be provided as soon as possible but in any case, within the timeline agreed by IMO.

Having extensively researched and consulted with leading Dry Bulk owners and a representative body for some of the shippers of HME cargoes, Intercargo is delighted to have met its members aspirations for a responsible solution."

Ends.

Notes to Editors

1. Intercargo represents over 160 bulk carrier owners/operators (vessels engaged in the transport of dry bulk commodities such as coal, grain and iron ore) and associates. With Non-Governmental Organisation status at the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Intercargo's objective is the creation of a "safe, efficient and environmentally friendly" dry cargo sector.
2. Intercargo, founded in 1980, works within the Round Table of international maritime associations comprising of BIMCO, the International Chamber of Shipping, Intercargo and Intertanko.
3. IMO is the United Nations specialised agency with responsibility for safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.

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