

UK P&I CLUB



LP Bulletin

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Bulletin 1096 - 05/16 - Stowing heavy on top of light containers - Worldwide

On 1st July changes to the SOLAS convention will require Ports to ensure containers are weighed prior to being loaded on vessels. A recent case investigated by Signum Services highlights the importance of this amendment.

Signum were called upon to enquire into six containers that had gone missing on route from Italy to Dubai. The initial allegation was that these containers may have been stolen from the discharge port. However, investigations at the destination and each port along the route discounted any erroneous removal of the containers from the vessel and led back to the port of loading. It transpired that the stowage plan had been created using weights provided at the initial time of booking (shown as 3 tonnes each). Whilst the final bills corrected the weights this was never picked up by the planners. This resulted in the vessel being stacked incorrectly. The top four containers (all made up of cement cargo) were 28 tonnes each. The two bottom containers were only 5 and 3 tonnes respectively. This meant that the total weight for that stack was 143 tonnes as opposed to the 50 tonnes permitted by the Cargo Securing Manual, as well as being top heavy and unstable.

The stack in question was located at the bow of the vessel on the very edge and had clearly been lost overboard during the voyage despite the Captain, Chief Officer and Crew apparently not being aware of what occurred at the time.

The new legislation will go a long way in preventing such accidents as the correct weight will be notified to the terminal and planners before the container is placed on board the vessel.

Signum Services welcome this new rule, not only to prevent accidents but also as a useful tool for those investigating theft or other cargo shortage claims.

Source of Information

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