



Ship Type: Bulk Trade Area: Indonesia

Bulletin 430 - 09/05 - Coal Cargo Problems - Indonesia

During the past three weeks we have been informed of spontaneous heating in the carriage of three coal cargoes loaded in Indonesia. (Adang Bay East Kalimantan, North Pulau Laut).

In the first case early detection of the heating was detected by monitoring of the hold atmosphere with suitable detection equipment. Hold sealing was improved and continued monitoring of the hold atmosphere throughout the voyage ensured safe delivery to the destination port.

In the second case the Master was presented with a declaration from the shippers that the coal was not liable to emit significant amounts of methane and not considered liable to spontaneous heating. However, smoke was seen to be pouring from the ventilators of one of the cargo holds within nine hours of departure from the port of loading.

As a precaution against methane accumulation in the hold, the IMO Code of Safe Practice for Solid Bulk Cargoes recommends that unless expressly directed otherwise, all holds should be surface ventilated for the first 24 hours after departing the load port.

The Master requested advice from the Owners and the Club and was advised to seal all hatch covers, ventilators, etc, using RAMNEK tape to assist sealing. Three days later the vessel called at Singapore for bunkers and further expert advice was provided and sealing improved. The vessel proceeded to the port of discharge submitting daily records of hold atmosphere monitoring, and arrived safely.

In the third case, smoke was observed coming from one of the hatches within nine hours of departure and the ship returned to the load port for remedial treatment.

Despite the cargo declarations, provided by some shippers of Indonesian coals, we have advice of many cargoes which have heated spontaneously during some stage of the voyage. We recommend the following:

1. All coal cargoes should be carried strictly in accordance with the recommendations of the IMO Code of Safe Practice for Solid Bulk Cargoes, which requires the ship to be fitted with hold atmosphere monitoring equipment;
2. The Master should ensure that he is provided with precise details of the cargo to be loaded; and
3. A strict watch of the coal to be loaded should be made throughout the loading operation. Any hot coal should be rejected. During the second incident referred to above, the Master of the vessel noted that coal in a barge at the anchorage was "smoking". This coal was not loaded on his vessel but may have been loaded on another vessel.

If any problems arise during the loading operation the Master should immediately contact his Owners and the Club, to seek expert advice.

Any Members contracted to load coal in Indonesia who would like further assistance, please contact the Loss Prevention Department or their regular Club contact.

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