

UK P&I CLUB



# LP Bulletin

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012

## Bulletin 848 - 10/12 - Fraudulent invoices - worldwide

**Fraudulent invoices have once more come to the Club's attention. Members are advised to be disciplined when processing invoices following a vessels port call.**

A recent case to extort funds through fraudulent invoicing was thwarted when an accounts clerk and the master of the vessel targeted discovered the false invoice. The vessel in question was billed for "Harbour and General Port services" however the itemised bill, including MARPOL discharge costs, were covered by the usual ports dues. Another worrying aspect of this most recent case was that the ships stamp seems to have been crudely copied in order to provide false evidence that the master of the vessel had seen and approved the invoice.

The Clubs investigative arm, Signum Services, have seen fraudulent practices such as these before. In a previous statement they advised the following;

There has been an increase in fraud cases recently and a general reminder to be more vigilant when checking documents, company logos and stamps. Also for accounts departments dealing with invoices especially with large sums to verify authenticity with their clients before payment.

Signum Services, the Club's investigative arm, has recently experienced cases where various Members' charter parties, bills of lading and invoices have been forged and used by fraudsters attempting to obtain money dishonestly from Members' clients and customers. Members of the Club are therefore advised to warn their customers to be extra vigilant in dealing with such documents, to check with the shipping company by whom they are purported to have been issued and to ensure that their accountancy and payment procedures are secure."

It seems it is virtually impossible to track the source of the fraudulent invoices in order to take punitive action against the fraudsters due to the location of their base of operations, which is thought to be in Egypt. The type of invoice changes regularly making it difficult to keep up to date with the criminals. The fraudulent invoices are not limited to Egyptian ports and are seen worldwide. Another such invoice was uncovered relating to a port call in Odessa, Ukraine. The modus operandi seems to be to send erroneous invoices to shipping companies in the hope that they are processed with little scrutiny.

For further advice on fake invoicing and other fraud crimes, visit the Signum Services webpage at the following address: <http://www.ukpandi.com/loss-prevention/signum-services/>

**Source of Information:**

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