

New initiative from grain terminal

There is nothing new in the fact that the internationally recognized trade allowance of 0.5% of the Bill of Lading weight is considered by some grain terminals as a logical explanation of the frequent difference between the shore scales and vessel's figure determined as per draught survey.



For any grain cargo loaded at ports of Novorossiysk, Taman and Tuapse, the sales contracts and Bills of Lading are ultimately based on the shore scale weighing result. Today it is quite unusual for the shippers to appoint a surveyor for independent draught surveys. However, having installed the accurate conveyor belt scales the terminals themselves took the initiative in arranging the draught surveys. What for?

The common answer from the surveyor appointed by terminal would be a need for '*reserve measurements of loaded cargo*'.

For the Master there is no other tool to check the accuracy of the shipper's figure rather than draught survey. When it comes to terminals, applying a method with 0.5% accuracy to verify electronic system of modern belt weigher sounds unreasonable and unrealistic. The idea of the reserve measurements is highly controversial, as in case of doubts about the correctness of shore scale the Bill of Lading quantity should not be based on the shore figure.

The only logical reason for the terminals to appoint a surveyor, is an attempt to keep the difference between the declared Bill of Lading figure and the vessel's figure within the 0.5% limit. To achieve the required results, an intermediate draught survey will be arranged shortly before completion of loading.

If the Charter Party contains a clause like '*Master to observe draft survey and sign draft survey reports at both ends, if required*' but there is no stipulation with regard to surveyor from terminal, the following must be taken into account:

- The Master is not obliged to accept and sign the draught survey report issued by surveyor representing the terminal, in particular, where the constant calculated during the initial draught survey is much less than usual and the terminal's surveyor is not willing to apply the average 'constant' from the previous voyages, if reports available onboard. The less the constant the more shortage of cargo is likely to arise at discharge port, and this difference is on top of that 0.5%.
- Chief Officer is not obliged to participate in the intermediate draught survey, unless it is required to separate different shipments and/or types of cargoes being loaded.

It appears that some terminals have decided to go even further by providing the Master with a Letter in Russian/English headed 'to all who it may concern during loading on vessel ...' and stating the following (original text):

- Draught survey will be done for the purpose of RESERVE measurement of loaded cargo;
- In case of difference between two measurements of loaded cargo not exceeding 0.5%,
ONLY the reading of terminal's shore scales will be used for release of the Bills of Lading.

In addition, a number of provisions are stated to dispute the correctness of vessel's figures (extract from the Letter received by vessel on arrival)

Данное условие будет действовать только при отсутствии влияющих на количество погруженного груза факторов, а именно:

This condition will work only in the case of absence factors influencing on quantity of the shipped freight, namely:

1. Ship's trim/ballast condition exceeded ballast correction tables / Дифференц судна в балласте превышает значения в таблице коррекции балласта.
2. Ship's tables aren't approved properly by class (hydrostatic tables/ballast calibration tables) / Судовые таблицы не утверждены должным образом классификационным обществом (гидростатические таблицы / балластные калибровочные таблицы).
3. The vessel received bunker/was supplied during cargo operation. The quantity of bunker/supplied provision weren't checked out by our surveyor / Во время грузовых операций производилась бункеровка/снабжение припасами. Количество бункера/снабжения не подтверждено нашим сюрвейером.
4. According to vessel's calibration tables the ballast tanks have considerable unpumpable residues. The actual quantity of ballast impossible to verify / В соответствии с судовыми калибровочными таблицами, балластные танки имеют значительные неоткачиваемые остатки. Фактическое количество остатков балласта невозможно проверить.

- The Master is advised not to accept and sign such letters as well as any other Letter of Reserve or Protest issued by the third party surveyors or the terminal's representatives with respect to the accuracy of vessel's figure.