



LP Bulletin

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Bulletin 666 - 11/09 - Fines - Gabon

The Association wishes to advise Members of the situation in a number of Gabonese ports. A large variety of fines have been imposed recently in Gabon by the Merchant Marine and Customs. Many of these fines have been deemed unfair and excessive.

The problem in Gabon began in 2005 when Port State Control inspectors were notified not to accept **copies** of ships certificates and documentation. If this is not possible then vessels are fined and often delayed. The majority of fines and detentions relate to alleged customs offences and the use of electronic or copied certificates. Members are advised to ensure that all certificates are available in original form onboard and that they are ready for inspection when calling at Gabonese ports, particularly Port Gentil.

In addition to the above information it should be noted that in Gabon, customs clearance should include:

- the name of the vessel and that of the Master
- the name of the previous port (for inward clearance), the name of the destination port (for outward clearance) and the name of the Gabonese port if the vessel is in transit to load more cargo
- the date of clearance was issued and the date of departure
- the quantity of cargo loaded and discharged
- the vessels flag
- the signature and stamp of the customs service
- the clearance document must be free of any alteration

In the past it has been noted that Masters who argue or mislead officials will often be subjected to further fines and delays. The Association would urge masters to be calm; this may allow the fine to be negotiated and subsequently reduced. If in any doubt, the Master should contact his local agent and the Club correspondent.

Source of information: Loss Prevention Department
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