



Ship Type: Containerships Trade Area: India

Loss Prevention Bulletin 213 - Container Seals: Onboard Pilferage

The following has been brought to our attention by the Club's correspondent in Calcutta:

In a recent incident the seal of a container was found to be missing when it was discharged from a feeder vessel. Ship's staff could not confirm that the seal was missing whilst the container was on board. The feeder operator's agents stated that the seal was missing at the time of landing and that they had subsequently placed a local seal on the container.

The container was an FCL, stuffed with 80 drums of chemicals. When the container was opened for customs appraisal by the receivers, an additional 12 packages were found. The extra 12 packages were found to be watch parts. It was discovered that an adjacent container (LCL) also had a missing seal and had been stuffed with various consignments, including one of 98 cartons of watch parts, 13 of which were found to be missing.

Investigations revealed that there was no Seal Inspection Report issued from the load port – Singapore, therefore the possibility that the seal was missing on loading could not initially be ruled out. However, it was asserted that if the seal was missing, the container would not have been accepted for loading.

Further investigations revealed that the container was loaded on board in such a position that the doors could be easily accessed. It transpired that an access hatch on board had been left open – the hatch being used by stevedores / labourers working in the hold. By leaving the hatch open and unattended, the vessel had no control over who had access to the cargo.

The Club would like to recommend to our members the following:

- All cargo hold accesses are to be locked when not in use.
- Access to cargo spaces is restricted to only those people required to be in the space for cargo operations.
- Stevedores should not be left unattended in cargo spaces.

Source of information: Pandi Correspondents Pvt Ltd., Kolkata