



Ship Type: All Trade Area: Europe

Bulletin 312 - 07/03 - Inadequate packing and stowage of clinical waste - EU

We have been advised by one of our Members of a recent case where a 40ft reefer container leaked hazardous class 6.2 cargo due to poor internal stowage and packing.

The shipper's own unit, in poor condition and thought to have an invalid [CSC](#) plate (Container Safety Certificate) and not to be following an 'Acceptance Continuously Evaluated Program' ([ACEP](#)), was discovered to be leaking red liquid - thought to be blood. The cargo manifest was consulted and it was found that the commodity loaded was clinical waste, Class 6.2, UN 3291, an infectious substance. In this case the cargo included animal carcasses, pharmaceutical waste, medicines and empty vials and syringes.

The IMDG code states that in cases involving this commodity, carriers should: -

"Inform the public health, veterinary or other competent authority if persons or the marine environment might have been exposed. A competent authority to which actual or suspected leakage is reported should notify the authorities of any countries in which the goods may have been handled, including countries of transit.

Radio for expert ADVICE.

Notify consignor / consignee".

On trying to advise the shipper of the situation in this case contact could not be made on the telephone using either the number detailed on the shipping documents or the emergency number marked on the container.

The vessel arrived at the port limits as per schedule, but due to the severity of the container leakage the local authorities, who had been informed of the incident prior to the ship's arrival, deemed the incident a potential health hazard and refused entry. After a sizeable delay, the relevant local authorities gave the ship clearance to enter the port. The ship then had to proceed to a special, inner berth via locks for the discharge of this one unit. Only after discharging the container could the vessel proceed to its normal berth.

When the container was inspected it was found that due to the stow not being blocked off at the top layers, the cargo had shifted resulting in the leakage. The bridge logbook showed that no adverse weather conditions were encountered on the relevant sea passage, so it was ascertained that the leakage was the result of: -

- 1 Improper and unseaworthy lashing and securing of the cargo inside the container
- 2 Improper stowage of the plastic containers on the pallets
- 3 The use of ineffective plastic containers i.e. barrels only approved for solids being used for liquids.
- 4 The number of and type of packaging were incorrectly described on the documents and the boxes and buckets were not loaded in conformance with the packing instruction 621 of the IMDG code.
- 5 Not all receptacles were hermetically sealed

Much expense will be incurred as a result of this incident i.e.: -

- 1 Loss of time due to the delays and deviations in berthing.
- 2 Cleaning costs: -
 - due to the liquid penetrating the space between the insulation and bottom plate of the container. The unit was declared as hazardous and will have to be extensively cleaned
 - the cleaning of the deck area and the collection of all waste water.
- 3 Extra measures taken and the special discharge of the container.

Members should be aware of the above problems and advise their commercial departments accordingly.

Source of information: Loss Prevention Department
IMDG Code