

Ship Type: Bulk Trade Area: Malaysia

Bulletin 405 - 03/05 - Sugar Cartels - Mombasa

The handling of sugar in the port of Mombasa requires a well planned, co-ordinated and monitored system to ensure no losses are suffered.

Sugar is normally packed in 50kg bags and is discharged by sling directly to trucks from the ship. The stevedores load a variable number of bags per sling, with two or three bags usually added in order to confuse the tally clerks. Shortlanding claims then follow. In order to avoid this practice, tallying should be carried out by bag and not by sling. It is advisable to put the tally clerks under the supervision of a discharge surveyor, both in the ship's hold and on the trucks and for them to take a count at both ends.

Bags sometimes break by straining in the tight slings. Spilled sugar is not swept up as any sweepings would be mixed with dirt, especially on wet surfaces. Stevedores carefully scoop up any spillage and take home one or two kgs at the end of each shift. They do not usually take more as they may face problems with port security when leaving the port. However, the accumulated loss of cargo at the end of discharge will be considerable. Close supervision is necessary, particularly to ensure that slings are tied in such a way that minimum straining damage is done to the bags.

Spillages also occur on the quayside from bags torn on the sharp edges of trucks or other protuberances. The torn bags are usually kept aside and the re-constitution of torn bags done at the end of the shift. Such bags will in most cases disappear at the end of the shift, especially if it is a night shift. Due to high pilferage and theft during the third shift (2300-0700hrs) the port requires that cargo of this type shall not be discharged during this shift. However receivers are at liberty to request third shift operations provided they indemnify the port authority against any shortfage claims. This creates ample opportunity for theft and there will usually be a disparity between the ship's figures and delivery figures on completion of discharge. Proper supervision of the activities on the quayside is therefore essential to ensure that the ship will have enough evidence to repudiate any short-landing claims. Initial and final draft surveys carried out in the presence of all interested parties (the KPA, receivers and the ship's surveyors) to verify the quantities discharged is very helpful.

For cargo damage on board ship, receivers often try to inflate the quantity damaged and even try to condemn the cargo before carrying out any laboratory analysis. A proper method of quantification of damaged cargo should be adopted. Our recommendation is that no damaged cargo is condemned before laboratory analysis. Any affected cargo should be treated as suspect cargo before laboratory analysis and kept at receivers' premises. The premises designated for storing suspect cargo should only be accessible by representatives of the interested parties. This analysis should be done immediately to avoid cargo deterioration.

Source of information: UK P&I Club

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