



Ship Type: Container

Trade Area: China

Bulletin 470 - 06/06 - Explosion of containerised fireworks - China

The Association has been advised that on 17 May 2006, containers of fireworks exploded in the Xia'ning New Port, China. A series of explosions caused damage to buildings up to 700 metres from the containers, and blast debris was found as far away as 500 metres.

This is the latest in the escalating number of firework incidents that are encouraging shipping lines to restrict or refuse firework shipments. Experts point out that properly manufactured and packed fireworks are relatively safe but a Chinese study last year found that only 57 percent of fireworks met basic quality standards, with banned chemicals and poor packaging among the problems that could result in transportation incidents.



The Club is concerned that with lines now refusing potentially unstable cargoes, shippers may be purposely not declaring or mis-declaring the contents of containers and putting ships and crews in danger.

To minimise the likelihood of a disaster everybody in the transport chain must exercise their best endeavours to ensure proper adherence to the IMDG requirements within their own operation. They should also promote the observance of the code and national safety standards by their clients. This can never be achieved without self-alert, supervision, staff training, and a good system to check and appraise clients and sub-contractors.

Members are advised to take necessary steps to protect themselves against any potential liability which may arise from the transportation of fireworks. It is suggested that Members confirm with the shippers that the shipper has correctly declared the nature of dangerous cargoes before accepting carriage and obtain the necessary certificates for the carriage of the goods, from the relevant authorities. In addition, the carrier should request that the shipper provide information in respect of handling precautions and emergency measures for the transportation of such cargoes.

The Club has recently produced a set of Guides on the safe carriage of dangerous goods by sea "Book it right and pack it tight." A leaflet explaining the purpose of the books and why the industry is seeing an increase in incidents involving such cargoes can be found on the Club's website by clicking on Dangerous Goods in the Loss Prevention area of the Club website www.ukpandi.com. Copies of the Guides are available to non Members at www.marisec.org.

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