

UK P&I CLUB



LP Bulletin

Friday 19th August 2011

Bulletin 780 - 08/11 - New Customs Regulations - Iraq

There has been some confusion surrounding a new customs regulation that has been imposed upon Iraqi ports recently. The regulation requires that cargo imports are certified to be in conformity with Iraqi standards.

Most imported goods now require certification to confirm that they are in conformity with Iraqi Standards issued by the Central Organisation for Standardisation and Quality Control. These certificates can be issued by BV or SGS. The regulation was originally scheduled to come into force in May 2011, but implementation was eventually reportedly delayed until January 2012.

However, in July the customs at Umm Qasr announced that the regulation would be implemented with immediate effect and that there will be no exceptions. It should be noted that this has little effect on major government imports such as the basic food ration distribution, power projects, or oil sector development. This regulation does affect the container trade which has been increasingly used by smaller traders importing a wide range of goods. It has been reported that a large number of containers have been delayed inside the port awaiting customs clearance. Many containers destined for the north of Iraq have been re-routed via Iran which has marketed safe and reasonably well developed road links to the northern Kurdish region since 2003.

It is unclear as to future developments but there is some hope that customs will relax implementation until 2012 by which time it is expected that all parties will have had a reasonable opportunity to organise the certification process.

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