

UK P&I CLUB



# LP Bulletin

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## Bulletin 784 - 09/11 - Argentine customs practices - Argentina

**It has come to the attention of the Club that some customs officials in Argentine ports are strengthening their resolve in the execution of their duties.**

Regrettably this is not the first time the Club has had to advise members regarding the stern and precise practices of Argentine customs officials. The Club issued similar advice in bulletins 178 & 358 pertaining to fines arising from the apparent mis-declarations of ships stores, bunkers, spares and the like.

The situation seems to arise from the first incidence of inspection at the vessel's first entry at an Argentine port. Customs require a "stores list" which has to be submitted to the customs officials at the time of clearing the vessel. It is important that, in addition to the usual lists submitted during customs inspections, the vessel should also include details of bunkers, lube oils, paints, chemicals, spare parts, stores, food and supplies, etc in their entirety.

When a vessel is boarded at a later stage by Customs Officers to inspect what has been declared in the "store list" submitted on arrival against the findings of their subsequent inspection, it is important for them not to find discrepancies or omissions regarding stores onboard.

If the Chief Engineer were to be asked to produce a list of bunkers and lube oils onboard it is important that this list is coincident with the initial declaration otherwise it is considered an infringement of customs regulations. It is also important that quantities are not duplicated.

In an incident involving one member, the Master of a vessel produced a standard list of contents of the ship's stores, which included the total volume, in litres, of paint and thinners onboard. The Master attached a purchase invoice for the paint to the list, which of course stipulated the details and quantities of the paint. The Argentine customs read both documents and took this to mean that there were in fact two lots of paint aboard the vessel. During their inspection, they found only one lot of paint and therefore declared the Masters declarations inaccurate and levied a fine against the vessel.

In other incidents customs inspectors noted that a bulk vessels Grabs had not been declared. In another incident spare rope had been the target of the inspectors objections. Sometimes these incidents result in a fine yet at other times these matters are resolved without penalty. There seems to be little correlation in each case which leads us to believe this is an arbitrary practice among some customs officers and not the policy of the authority itself.

These problems are difficult to overcome but not difficult to defend if proper attention is given at the time of submitting the "store list" to the customs officials.

It is strongly advised that members with vessels calling at Argentine ports contact and remain in close communication with their local agent who may advise the best course of action in these circumstances.

**Source of Information:**

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