



Friday 18th May 2012

Bulletin 824 - 05/12 - Hydrochloric acid cargo leaks - USA

The Houston/Galveston branch of the US Coast Guard has issued an alert concerning leaking containers loaded with hydrochloric acid. The alert reports that the primary cause of the leaks were improper loading and securing within the containers.

The Coast Guard report also highlights shipping placards to be too small and emergency contact information lacking. In all instances leading to the publication of this report the shippers of these containers were located in south Asia.

There have been many recent incidents involving leaking containers of hydrochloric acid on the US highways and railways. One such incident led to the evacuation of a town in Colorado while crews transferred the dangerous chemicals from one leaking container to a safer unit. Fumes from hydrochloric acid are a cause of irritation to skin, eyes and lungs.

The Club would like to advise Members of the precautions which should be taken when shipping this commodity such as inspecting containers prior to loading; ensure blocking and bracing is adequate; ensure shipping paperwork and emergency contact information is correct and complete and placards of proper size are in place.

Tank containers are also problematic as older tanks improperly maintained are prone to leaks. Failed tank linings and valves are frequently the cause of leaking tanks. The tanks exterior condition should be inspected prior to being released for road or rail transport.

Full text of the USCG Marine Safety Information Bulletin can be found at the following web address; www.brymar-consulting.com/wp-content/uploads/Misc/MSIB_02-12.pdf

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