

UK P&I CLUB



# LP Bulletin

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2012

## Bulletin 849 - 10/12 - Drug enforcement activity and Fines - USA

**Drug enforcement activity in the United States targeting the trafficking of drugs entering the United States of America via merchant vessels continues to impact the Club in the guise of fines levied against unsuspecting ships.**

The Club continues to see hefty fines imposed by American authorities on entered vessels on which drugs have been found.

Recent cases cost the Club almost \$500K in fines after United States Coast Guard (USCG) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officers searched and found significant quantities of Cocaine onboard three entered vessels.

In these particular cases the Cocaine was found on vessels which had recently operated in the Central or South American regions. As these regions are the source of the majority of Cocaine which enters the United States the authorities are understandably more vigilant in their anti-drug trafficking duties towards vessels which operate in these areas.

The Club would advise members of the necessity to implement and maintain high levels of vigilance when in these regions so as to better protect themselves against drug traffickers.

Preventative measures include;

- Having a watchman on the gangway at all times and admitting no person onboard the vessel unless they are a crew member and have photo ID, is a Customs official with proper identification or have been pre-approved to board by the Master.
- Limiting access to non-essential areas of the ship to stevedores.
- Escorting embarked visitors at all times when in accommodation areas
- Searching bags and hold-all of persons embarking the vessel at the gangway (to include all visitors, stevedores and crew returning from shore leave)

**Source of Information:**

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