



Guidance for those undertaking fumigation operations alongside

Notice to all ship owners, ship operators, terminal operators, port authorities, classification societies, agents, charterers, shippers, consignors, masters and all other parties involved in the carriage of cargoes by sea.

Summary

The purpose of this Marine Guidance Note is to highlight the importance of fumigation being undertaken by professionally trained personnel in line with guidance published by the Health and Safety Executive and the International Maritime Organization. This follows an incident where the fumigant on a general cargo vessel was discovered to be still active on discharge of cargo.

1. Background

1.1 A fumigated cargo of maize was being discharged from a general cargo vessel, when it became apparent that the fumigant was still active. The cargo operations were immediately stopped and the crew were evacuated to the quayside. The fire brigade were quickly on the scene and nearby houses and retail premises were evacuated as a precautionary measure. Eight of the vessel's eleven crew and a stevedore were taken to hospital for observation and decontamination.

2. Health and Safety Executive and International Maritime Organization Guidance

2.1 The Health and Safety Executive have produced revised guidance which outlines the risks and describes the law that applies to fumigation operations. It contains specific advice with respect to procedures common to all fumigation operations including the use of monitoring equipment, personal protective equipment and respiratory equipment, health surveillance and first aid. There is also advice on precautions for specific fumigation environments, alternative fumigation technologies, the health effects associated with certain fumigants and other legislation applicable to fumigants. The guidance is available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/hsg251.pdf>. It is strongly advised that fumigation is carried out by trained personnel.



2.2 The International Maritime Organization has also produced recommendations on the safe use of pesticides in ships applicable to the fumigation of cargo transport units which is aimed at everyone in the supply chain. This guidance is available at: http://www.imo.org/blast/blastDataHelper.asp?data_id=22227&filename=1265.pdf.

3 Port Marine Safety Code

3.1 It is strongly advised that all those undertaking fumigation operations alongside, consider the guidance which is contained in the Port Marine Safety Code. The Code was developed to improve safety in UK ports and to enable harbour authorities to manage their marine operations to nationally agreed standards. Those using ports should follow the guidance on how to comply and review the lessons learnt from incidents which have occurred in harbours. Guidance can be found in “A Guide to Good Practice on Port Marine Safety Operations”. Recommendations and the common lessons that can be learnt from major incidents, can be found on the Marine Accident Investigation Branch website.

More Information

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