

Cargo - Nickel Ore

14th September 2018

The dangers associated with the carriage of nickel ore, due to the risk of liquefaction of the cargo on passage when the moisture content is higher than the cargo's Flow Moisture Point (FMP), are well known.

Following a succession of ships being lost, with liquefaction of their nickel ore cargoes being suspected of being the root cause of the sinkings, the Club published a Notice to Members in August 2013 addressing the Dangers of Carrying Nickel ore. This Notice was subsequently re-issued as No.13 2017/2018 – [Dangers of Carrying Nickel Ore from Indonesia and the Philippines – Mandatory Notification Requirements \(re-issued\)](#) which remains in force.

Members are reminded of the very real risk of liquefaction with this cargo, as evidenced by the loss of the "Emerald Star" with associated loss of life in October 2017. The Club has also been made aware of a very recent near miss incident involving a vessel which had loaded 55,000t of nickel ore at Languyan, Tawi-Tawi, the Philippines, for China. On passage the vessel encountered several days of Beaufort Force 7 winds and associated rough seas just prior to arrival at the discharge port. Subsequently, high cargo hold bilge sounding levels were observed in some holds and a visual inspection found that the cargo in the forward two of the vessel's five holds had started to liquefy.

Representative samples of the cargo were obtained following discharge and submitted for independent testing to determine Moisture Content and FMP, and hence the Transportable Moisture Limit (TML). FMP was determined by means of both the flow table test and the penetration test. Testing found that the moisture content of the cargo exceeded the FMP determined by both test methods by several percent and the cargo was therefore unsafe for loading and carriage.

In order to manage the risk associated with loading this Group A cargo in the Philippines and Indonesia, the requirements of the schedule for nickel ore along with the guidance concerning cargoes that may liquefy in the IMSBC Code should be closely followed. Further, the Club's notification and survey requirements as per [Notice to Members No.13 2017/2018](#) and in the associated bye-law within the Rules: Carriage of Nickel Ore from Indonesia and the Philippines, must be met.

Members requiring any further guidance should contact the [Loss Prevention department](#).

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