

# MEMBER ALERT



Shipowners Claims Bureau, Inc., Manager  
One Battery Park Plaza 31<sup>st</sup> Fl., New York, NY 10004 USA  
Tel: +1 212 847 4500  
Fax: +1 212 847 4599

<https://www.american-club.com>

OCTOBER 13, 2021

## GOOD CATCH UPDATES: DANGER FROM IGNORING AN ALARM AND ECDIS OVER-RELIANCE

Your Managers are pleased to present the latest instalments of the Club's *Good Catch* initiative:

- *Danger From Ignoring an Alarm* in [English](#), [new](#) and [traditional](#) Mandarin; and
- *ECDIS Over-reliance* in [English](#), [new](#) and [traditional](#) Mandarin.

### GOOD CATCH from The American Club

#### Danger From Ignoring an Alarm

**Description**

A multi-purpose cargo vessel was on an international voyage with a cargo of stacked lumber when the fire alarm for cargo hold #3 sounded on the fire alarm system panel on the bridge. The Mate on watch silenced the alarm and made a note to notify the Chief Engineer or electrician. In the previous several days, the fire alarm had gone off intermittently and this appeared to be a system malfunction resulting in false alarms.

When he got off watch an hour later, the Mate spoke with the Chief Engineer informing him that the alarm had sounded for cargo hold #3 and he believed it was probably just another false alarm like they had been experiencing. Shortly thereafter, the Chief Engineer asked the electrician to check it out. The electrician grabbed his tool bag and proceeded to the bridge. Everything checked out fine and when he rebooted the system, the fire alarm for cargo hold #3 again sounded. He raised and learned that no one had actually checked the cargo hold.

He and the Chief Mate proceeded to cargo hold #3 and quickly realized that there was a fire. The general alarm was sounded. The crew responded quickly, extinguishing the fire using the installed CO2 system. The cause of the fire was later determined to be heat from one of the recessed bright lights in the hold that had been left on after loading. The heat from the light was sufficient to ignite the plastic cover over the lumbar and then the lumbar itself that had been stacked just inches from the light.

**Actual Damages**

Damage to the ship was minimal and mostly limited to parts in the hold and below cover. A portion of the lumbar was burned and damages were estimated to be \$85,000. Had the fire not been silenced to smolder and burn from the time the alarm initially sounded until the fire was discovered, the damage would have been a fraction of what it was.

**Potential Damages**

Had the electrician not asked whether anyone had checked to see if there was an actual fire, the fire could have potentially continued to burn for an extended period of time before discovery. It could have spread to adjacent holds and potentially seriously damaged or even jeopardized the ship's structure.

AMERICAN CLUB GOOD CATCH Danger From Ignoring an Alarm October 2021

### Prevention

- Every alarm should be treated as real until it has been fully investigated to determine if it is true or false.
- Never assume an alarm is the result of a system malfunction.
- Trust the instrumentation and installed alarms regardless of any past or present issues with them.

When you identify a hazard before something goes wrong... **It's a Good Catch.**

When you stop an operation before something bad happens... **It's a Good Catch.**

When you treat an alarm as real until proven otherwise... **that's a Good Catch, too!**

The American Club would like to specially thank independent Marine Consultants, LLC, for their contribution to this document.

American Steamship Owners Mutual Protection & Indemnity Association, Inc.

<b>Shipowners Claims Bureau, Inc., Manager</b>	<b>Shipowners Claims Bureau (Pte) Ltd., Inc.</b>
<b>New York</b>	<b>Shanghai</b>
tel: +1 212 847 4500 fax: +1 212 847 4599	tel: +86 21 3360 4300 fax: +86 21 3360 4167
www: www.american-club.com	www: www.american-club.com
<b>Houston</b>	<b>SCB Management Consulting Services, Ltd.</b>
tel: +1 281 223 9300 fax: +1 281 223 9300	tel: +852 3450 2800 fax: +852 3450 2812
www: www.american-club.com	www: www.american-club.com
<b>Shipowners Claims Bureau (UK) Ltd.</b>	<b>SCB Management Consulting (China) Co., Ltd.</b>
<b>London</b>	<b>Shanghai</b>
tel: +44 20 7759 1850 fax: +44 20 7759 1850	tel: +86 21 3360 5000 fax: +86 21 3360 5100
www: www.american-club.com	www: www.american-club.com



As a reminder, all *Good Catch* alerts and animations are posted at the Club's website at:

[https://www.american-club.com/page/good\\_catch](https://www.american-club.com/page/good_catch)

Your Managers recommend that Members take note of this information and be guided accordingly.