

MEMBER ALERT



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THE CARRIAGE OF CARGOES OF BAUXITE

Members may have seen recent press reports concerning the loss of the vessel BULK JUPITER which sank off the coast of Vietnam some days ago.

The vessel was carrying a cargo of bauxite loaded at Kuantan in Malaysia. Although it is at present not possible to identify a specific cause, the circumstances, at least as presently understood, are similar to those of previous cases involving cargo liquefaction.

The liquefaction of bauxite cargo specifically has, indeed, occurred in the past. Such cargoes have been those which, for the most part, have contained a large proportion of very fine material.

The International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes Code (IMSBC) lists bauxite as a group C cargo, i.e. one not known to liquefy or possess a chemical hazard. However, this categorization only applies to bauxite cargoes which have a moisture content between 0% and 10% and which consist of 70% to 90% of lumps with a size between 2.5 mm and 500 mm, and 10% to 30% of powder.

Where any of the properties listed in Appendix 1 of the Code for such cargoes are not fulfilled – for example where heavy local rainfall has created an excessive moisture content of a shipment to be loaded – then the requirements of section 1.3 of the IMSBC Code for cargoes which do not fall within the above specifications should be followed.

In short, Members intending to carry cargoes of bauxite should be aware of the above and, in particular, that such cargoes are prone to liquefaction in certain circumstances. In any event, should Members have any concerns over the carriage of cargoes of bauxite, they are urged to contact the Managers for further advice and assistance.