# MEMBER ALERT

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

www.american-club.com

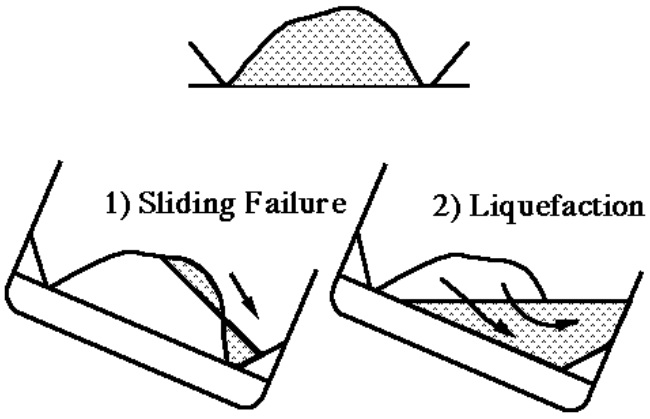
**SEPTEMBER 15, 2009**

## LOADING OF IRON ORE AT INDIAN PORTS: AN UPDATE

Reference is made to the Member Alert of October 3, 2007 entitled *"Iron Ore Loaded in Indian Ports"*.

During the interim period, your Managers have come to be aware of an increasing number of problems concerning the liquefaction of shipments of iron ore fines originating from ports on the west coast of India, particularly during the monsoon season.

Most recently, INTERCARGO has reported the loss of two vessels in separate incidents occurring while each was carrying cargoes loaded in India during the monsoon season. Neither, incidentally, was entered in the American Club.




It may be premature to suggest that cargo conditions contributed to these losses, at least until the nature of the cargoes, fines or otherwise, becomes apparent in subsequent enquiries. However, loading conditions associated with the monsoon season, together with unconfirmed reports that one vessel had been loaded with cargo having a high transportable moisture limit (TML), suggests that a properly conducted professional laboratory test should be an essential prerequisite to the acceptance of such a cargo before loading.

When iron ore fines are loaded in the rain, or left uncovered on the quayside, they absorb significant amounts of water. This may not be readily apparent, since the surface of the iron ore may appear dry. However, high water content can cause the cargo to liquefy when loaded onboard a ship. This can result in subsequent shifting, creating a potentially perilous situation for the vessel and her crew. A simple graphic representation of the distinction between a sliding failure of an iron ore cargo, as well as the liquefaction thereof, and the physical consequences arising therefrom, is set out in the diagram above.

As mentioned in the Club's previous Member Alert, the shipper of any cargo prone to liquefaction is obliged to provide the moisture content and the TML to the carrier. This should be kept for record purposes. Moreover, the master and crew must remain vigilant at all times and be ready to question shippers if any doubt over the properties of the cargo should arise. Your Managers recommend the completion of regular tin tests, details of which

can be found in Section 8 (*Test procedures for cargoes which may liquefy*) of the Code for Safe Practice for Solid Bulk Cargoes, 2004 (BC Code).

Masters are advised to refer to the other guidance contained in that document. In addition, your Managers strongly advise Members to contact the local P&I correspondent should any problems of this nature occur.

It is also suggested that Members and their Masters should confirm with the shippers the details of cargo as required under SOLAS Chapter VI (*Carriage of cargoes*), regulations 2 (*Cargo information*) and 7 (*Loading, unloading and stowage of bulk cargoes*). The ore stockpiles intended to be loaded should be identified so that surveyors can obtain samples for testing. These should be submitted to an approved laboratory for analysis of the cargo's moisture content, TML and its flow moisture point. The cargo should only be accepted for loading if the moisture content is below the TML.

A laboratory in India which has established a routine for such testing – and which can be regarded as highly reliable in respect thereof – has the following details:

*Admiralty Inspection & Analytical Services*
Chennai, India – 600 005
Phone: +91 44 28594327
Fax: +91 44 28552740
Email: chennai@admiraltyindia.com

The identity and contact details of this laboratory are provided for the convenience of Members. In any event, Members are urged to exercise care in the selection of such providers, whether or not they are inclined to use the services described above, or those of another laboratory.