

# MEMBER ALERT



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## GOOD CATCH UPDATE: *CORRODED OR DAMAGED FUEL OIL VENT PIPES IN CARGO HOLDS*


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

- *Corroded or Damaged Fuel Oil Vent Pipes in Cargo Holds* in [English](#), [new](#) and [traditional](#) Mandarin.

**GOOD CATCH** from The American Club  
**Corroded or Damaged Fuel Oil Vent Pipes in Cargo Holds**

**Description**  
A bulk cargo vessel experienced a serious problem when some of the clay cargo entered fuel oil tanks through holes in the fuel oil tank vent pipes located in the cargo hold. The problem was first noticed by the engineers when the fuel oil filters became heavily clogged with what appeared to be cargo. After the engineers shifted to a different fuel oil tank, the problem stopped.  
After emptying the clay and cleaning the cargo holds, the vent pipes were closely inspected in each cargo hold. Several fuel oil vent pipes were found to have been holed by severe corrosion while others were so severely corroded and at risk of failure. The holes were found in locations that were not easily accessible. Analysis of fuel oil in the bunker tanks confirmed contamination from the cargo.  
The discovery of contaminated fuel and the holes in the fuel oil vent pipes necessitated an unscheduled repair period. The contaminated fuel had to be disposed of properly. The contaminated fuel oil tanks had to be cleaned and made safe for hot work. The corroded vent pipes had to be replaced. The vessel was out of service for over 2 weeks.

**Actual Damages**  
Luckily, the problem was discovered before any machinery was damaged. However, the cost to dispose of the contaminated fuel, clean the affected fuel oil tanks, make the necessary repairs and replace the contaminated fuel cost well in excess of \$100,000 and the vessel was out of service for more than two weeks.



**GOOD CATCH** Corroded or Damaged Fuel Oil Vent Pipes in Cargo Holds December 2021

**Potential Damages**  
While it may have been unlikely that this particular fuel contamination could have damaged machinery, rapid clogging of the filters could have unexpectedly shut down one or more engines. Had the cargo been soluble in fuel oil and of a highly abrasive nature, the fuel oil purifier and associated filters may not have been able to prevent the abrasive cargo from reaching and damaging the engines. Furthermore, had the cargo been sensitive to the fuel oil or fuel oil vapors, cargo damage could also have occurred.

**Prevention**  
Fuel oil tank vent pipes should be inspected regularly and thoroughly to ensure that:  
a. the fuel is not contaminated by cargo;  
b. cargo is not contaminated by the fuel or fuel vapors; and  
c. fuel vapors do not enter spaces not designed for fuel vapors.  
Particular attention should be paid to fuel oil tank vent pipes that are:  
a. vulnerable to damage during cargo operations; or  
b. partially hidden or less visible, especially if corrosive or abrasive cargo are to be loaded or have been carried.  
A corroded fuel oil tank vent pipe in one cargo hold should immediately raise concerns about similar vent pipe problems in other cargo holds.

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 a thorough inspection identifies a hole in a fuel oil tank vent pipe and it is corrected before the fuel is contaminated... **that's a Good Catch, too!**

  
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[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.