



GOOD CATCH from **The American Club**

Steel-Eating Insects Found on Vessels!

(Hatch Cover Corrosion)

Description

A rare species of steel-eating insects has been found on ocean-going vessels recently. The flying insects attach themselves to exposed steel surfaces and declare “It’s time to eat!” These insects have been particularly difficult to identify because the holes they create in the steel look amazingly

similar to rust spots and corrosion wastage. These voracious insects have been found on every type of vessel and across the world. However, insect experts have discovered that standard primer and paint has been positively shown to stop their spread.

For real? No.

But corrosion and wastage on hatch covers is a real problem. A vessel carrying containers had several holes in their hatch covers due to corrosion. When the vessel arrived, they discovered that one cargo hold had 12-14 inches (30-35 cm) of water at the aft end of the hold. Sixteen containers had water ingress. The cargo was not damaged in 4 of the containers, but in the other 12 containers, the cargo was a total loss. Several of those containers were loaded with consumer electronics. Several others had automotive spare parts. One had designer leather shoes.

On investigation, the crew did not conduct daily inspections of the cargo hold bilges and had overly relied on bilge level alarms. Unfortunately, the bilge level alarm in this hold failed when the float switch had become stuck. The vessel had no records of hatch cover inspections or preventive maintenance on the hatch covers.

The water ingress into the cargo holds was worse than experienced on previous voyages. The vessel had encountered several days of heavy rain and high seas during their transit. But it was also raining heavily while the containers were being loaded. Thus, the source of the water could not be positively determined but it was likely from a combination of both sources.



Actual Damage

The damage to the cargo in the containers exceeded \$675,000. Additionally, several of the containers had to be scrapped at a cost of \$21,000 each. Repairs to the bilge level alarms only cost \$175.



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Potential Damages

While the safety of the vessel was not at risk in this specific instance, the ship owner and their P&I Club were fortunate that the cargo had not been of even more value.

Prevention

- ★ Are hatch covers inspected periodically for signs of wear, or corrosion, or damage?
- ★ What should you do when you see a hatch cover with a structural or corrosion problem?
- ★ What is your common practice for checking proper operation of cargo hold bilge alarms?
- ★ What is your common practice for checking the cargo hold bilges prior to departure and while underway?

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 recognize that a cargo hatch cover has excessive corrosion or has holes from corrosion and say something...

that's a Good Catch, too!



The American Club would like to specially thank [Independent Maritime Consulting, LLC](#) for their contribution to this document.



American Steamship Owners Mutual Protection & Indemnity Association, Inc.

Shipowners Claims Bureau, Inc., Manager

New York

tel +1 212 847 4500 fax +1 212 847 4599
email info@american-club.com web www.american-club.com

Houston

tel +1 346 223 9900
email claims@american-club.com

Shipowners Claims Bureau (UK) Ltd.

London

tel +44 20 7709 1390
email claims@scb-uk.com

Shipowners Claims Bureau (Hellas), Inc.

Piraeus

tel +30 210 429 4990 fax +30 210 429 4187
email claims@scb-hellas.com

SCB Management Consulting Services, Ltd.

Hong Kong

tel +852 3905 2150
email hkinfo@scbmcs.com

SCB Management Consulting (China) Co., Ltd.

Shanghai

tel +86 21 3366 5000 fax +86 21 3366 6100
email claims@scbmcs.com