



GOOD CATCH from The American Club

They Wanted It Stowed Like That (Stowage Plan)

Description

In what was a very complicated stowage plan, the stevedores and the vessel crew were able to stow the cargo leaning at exactly the specified angles. That stow was additionally complex because each stack of cargo was specified to be stowed at slightly different angles. The successful stow was only accomplished through the using of levels, multiple plumb bobs, and inclinometers.

What? Did that really happen? **No, not really.**

In this case, the cargo of Italian ceramic floor tile was poorly crated, poorly stowed, and poorly braced. The crew observed the stowage and noted that they felt the cargo was insufficiently stowed, but never said anything. As per the charter party, the cargo stowage was the responsibility of the charterer and not the vessel operator or crew. The Chief Officer even commented that if the charterer was concerned about the cargo stowage, he could have hired a third-party expert to verify the stowage was sufficient. Thus, the vessel got underway with cargo they knew to be inadequately stowed.

As a result of the poor stowage, about 15% of the cargo had shifted and was damaged when the vessel encountered moderate seas. The crew had checked the cargo holds daily and observed that some of the cargo had shifted progressively each day, but the Master did not feel it was safe to send crewmembers into the cargo hold to try the prevent further damage. Subsequently, they observed and recorded additional damage to the cargo over the next few days until the weather improved.

On arrival at the offloading port, the cargo damage delayed the offloading until the cargo condition was documented and a detailed cargo damage survey was completed. The offloading process itself was substantially slower as the leaning cargo crates and damaged cargo crates had to be carefully handled individually.



Actual Damage

The damage to the cargo exceeded \$1.05 million. The vessel was delayed at the dock for 6 extra days.

Potential Damages

Several crates of cargo were found leaning but were undamaged. Had the sea conditions been worse, or had the moderate sea conditions been prolonged, the damage could easily have been double the cost.

Prevention

- ★ Who reviews and approves the stowage plan for the cargo?
- ★ Is it reviewed from the perspective of how poor or inadequate stowage could damage the vessel or jeopardize the safety of the vessel or crew?
- ★ When should you say something about cargo not being adequately stowed?
- ★ When is it appropriate to issue a Letter of Protest related to inadequate cargo stowage?

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 poor or inadequate stowage of cargo and raise it as an issue right away...

that's a Good Catch, too!



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