

MEMBER ALERT

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LIFEBOAT DRILLS IN GEORGIA

Recently, a vessel entered with the Club transited to Georgia to load a cargo of copper concentrate. While awaiting loading operations to commence, the vessel's Master decided to run a lifeboat drill and lowered one of the lifeboats to the water with a crewman inside.

The "Head of Adjarian Regional Department of Coast Guard Main Administration of State Department of Georgian State Frontier Guard" decreed that the lifeboat drill violated the Georgian "Frontier" laws (in Georgian Code Articles 24, 33, 190, 249, 266, 267 and 270 – 272).

As penalty for the purported violation, the ship was detained until a fine of Georgian Lari 200,000 (USD 94,340) was paid by the shipowner. The Georgian authorities would not accept security in any form and insisted on a cash remittance before the vessel was permitted to sail.

The Member paid the money so that the vessel could depart and is currently appealing the authorities' actions. Georgian legal counsel, assisting the Member on the Member's account is pessimistic that the appeal will be successful.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While the Club's Managers consider that this fine is unlikely to be a characteristic of many ports where basic SOLAS and STCW 95 requirements are routinely carried out without risk of sanction, Members are urged to ensure that their crews determine that such drills at any port worldwide are not likely to contravene with national laws.