

MEMBER ALERT



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WINTER ICE CONDITIONS IN NORTHERN CHINESE PORTS

It has come to your Managers' attention that there has been a significant build-up of sea ice around Bohai on the northern Yellow Sea coast involving several major northern Chinese ports such as Bayuquan and Dalian. It is reported that the volume of sea ice is in excess of anything experienced in more than 30 years.

At Bayuquan, patches of ice of 500-600 mm in thickness have been observed in some places, while patches of 300-400mm have been seen in the immediate vicinity of the port. Three icebreakers are engaged in breaking the ice to avoid delays to ships entering and departing the port. The local Maritime Safety Authority (MSA) is strictly supervising inbound and outbound vessel traffic and has requested that vessels under 2,000 DWT do not enter the port.

Other northern ports – such as Jingtang, Caofeidian and Xingang – are, it appears, currently not as seriously affected by these ice conditions. Channels and berths are operating normally and inbound and outbound vessel traffic has not been disturbed. To date, there are no reported incidents resulting from ice conditions at the above ports, the port authorities using high-powered tugs to break the ice when necessary.

On January 17, 2010 the Chinese National Sea Weather Forecast Station reported that floating ice around Liaodong Gulf extended as far as some 60 nautical miles from shore, at Bohai Gulf around 22 nautical miles from shore. North Yellow Sea around 14 nautical miles from shore, and at Laizhou Gulf around 33 nautical miles from shore. However, on the arrival of cold weather fronts expected later, ice coverage around the Bohai coast could get larger.

Vessels which are scheduled to call at northern Chinese ports – especially Bayuquan – should prepare for the extreme temperatures and make sure Port State Control requirements are strictly followed to avoid unnecessary delay. Owners are also recommended to consult their local agent in advance for updated and detailed information.

Your Managers thank Huatai Agency & Consultant Services, Ltd. for information relating to this Alert.