



Athens, Greece

“Prevent, Don’t Cure”

Circular 01/03/15

Subject: Incorrect Custom Declaration / Undeclared Items - Important Issue!

Case: Recently, it has been reported that some cargo vessels faced difficulties in Argentina when the Argentinian Custom Authorities boarded and requested to conduct a full search of the vessels’ stores. Upon completion of the investigation, the Custom Authorities advised the Masters that the vessels failed to declare the accurate quantities of bunkers and lube oil on board. As a result, the vessels were fined for carrying more fuel oil on board than the total quantity stated in the vessels’ Custom Declaration. The imposed fine corresponded to the value of the bunkers and lube oil, plus an additional charge, equal to the “undeclared items”.

It is understood that resulting fines may vary between 50,000 USD and 300,000 USD and moreover the fined vessels are not permitted to sail until the fine is covered.

In connection to the above, and in order to assist our clients to avoid facing future complications in similar conditions, we would like to remind our clients of the following:

- Masters of vessels should be particularly vigilant and attentive when filling in the Custom Declaration and Ship’s Store List, in order to prevent any misunderstanding/confusion. The content of the declaration, as well as the declaration form should be double checked.
- The Master usually fills in the subject figures by hand upon arrival. In this instance, it is important to keep in mind that the Bunkers and Lube oil sheet should not be submitted as an attachment to the Store List, as it may be lost or disregarded by a possible Custom Authority search.
- Masters are reminded to follow their local agent’s advice for accurate completion of the Customs Declaration and to ensure that the declared quantities of fuel oil match to the actual amount of fuel oil remaining on board on arrival.
- If a similar case occurs and a fine is imposed, the Master of the vessel should immediately contact the Owner/ Managers who in turn may contact the P & I Correspondent for assistance.

The same issues may be encountered in certain African Countries, such as Senegal and Ivory Coast, and also countries in South America or Ukraine.

We remain at your disposal for more details,

Prevention at Sea

[Source: SKULD & WEST OF ENGLAND P & I]

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