

## NORTH P&I CLUB FLAGS UP BREAK-BULK CARGO STOWAGE PROBLEMS

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The 'A' rated 170 million GT North P&I Club has experienced an increase in claims arising from poor stowage and securing of break bulk cargoes, particularly on ships departing from China. Such cargoes - typically of bags and timber as well as construction components and plant - can put people, cargo and vessels at risk if they start shifting whilst a vessel is at sea.

According to North's head of loss prevention Tony Baker, 'Poor loading practices of break bulk cargoes are particularly prevalent in Chinese ports and have led to cargo shifting and stows collapsing during voyages. This in turn has resulted in damage to vessels and cargo and to items of cargo being lost overboard, resulting in substantial claims.'

Baker says the problems include over-stowing incompatible cargoes and the improper or insufficient use of lashings, dunnage and shoring. 'For example we have seen heavy cargoes such as steel girders, vehicles and containers stowed over jumbo bulk bags, and lashings tied to ship's ladders and pipework that are obviously not designed for the task,' he says.

North has highlighted the issue in the latest issue of its loss prevention newsletter *Signals*, in which it reminds Masters of their obligations under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) to ensure all cargoes are loaded, stowed and secured appropriately for the intended passage - even if charterers are responsible for loading.

'We are aware of instances where Masters have challenged stevedores on the method of stowage and securing of the cargo and yet stevedores have ignored these objections,' says Baker. 'It is vital in such situations that masters exercise their authority and stop further loading until satisfied the stowage and securing is safe.'

The Club says it is worth involving charterers as soon as any problems are discovered to minimise disruption. If concerns are not addressed by stevedores, a written note of protest should be issued. North also recommends shipowners appoint a competent supercargo to improve communications with stevedores.

The Club has also published a new loss prevention poster to help raise awareness of problems resulting from poor break bulk stowage. Entitled *Stowage and Securing*, the new poster in North's *Cargo Wise* series shows the aftermath of poor stowage and provides brief guidance on how to carry it out properly.

### Ends

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### Notes to editors

North is a leading marine mutual liability insurer providing P&I, FD&D, war risks and ancillary insurance to 127 million GT of owned tonnage and 43 million GT of chartered tonnage, with 3500 ships entered by 330 Members worldwide. It is based in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK with regional offices in Greece, Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore. The club is a leading member of the International Group of P&I Clubs (IG), with over 12.5% of the IG's owned tonnage. The 13 IG clubs provide liability cover for approximately 90% of the world's ocean-going tonnage and, as a member of the IG, North supports, protects and promotes the interests of the international shipping industry.