

IUMI issues best practice recommendations on the use of “flexitanks”



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Today, the International Union of Marine Insurance (IUMI) has published a comprehensive best practice guide for the safe use of flexible tanks for the transport of liquid cargoes. Its objective is to provide underwriters, brokers and their clients with practical guidance to ensure cargoes transported by flexible tanks arrive intact at their chosen destination.



Flexible tanks – or flexitanks – are poly film bladders that are filled with a liquid cargo (such as dairy products, wine, fruit juice or non-dangerous oils) and then placed into a standard ISO container for transportation.

Explaining the issue, Lars Lange, Secretary General of IUMI said:

“The use of flexitanks has grown significantly in recent years mainly due to reduced transportation costs when compared with a tank container. But this method, if not correctly managed, is easily prone to damage. And once a flexitank is ruptured a total cargo loss usually occurs. This impacts not only on the insurer, the cargo owner and carrier but there is a very real risk of third-party and possible environmental impact as well.”

The paper outlines a range of potential risks including poor stowage, incorrect installation, overloading, material deficiencies, transport issues and others. It goes on to highlight the potential impact which might include additional costs incurred over and above the loss of the cargo and consequential damage such as ESG or third-party issues.

Recommendations for safe use and carriage are contained within the main paper and its three detailed annexes. They include:

- selection of flexitanks and containers,
- container preparation,
- installation,
- transportation,

- emergency preparedness.

Checklists covering selection, preparation, installation and loading are also included.

Lars Lange concludes:

“One of IUMI’s central roles is to gather and share knowledge amongst the international marine insurance community to enhance the safety and efficiency of seaborne trade. These guidelines focus on a specific issue that, in our view, will benefit from a change to current practices so that liquid cargoes transported by flexitanks remain safe and free from damage. My thanks go to IUMI’s Loss Prevention Committee and our Professional Partner Battermann & Tillery Group for compiling such a comprehensive document.”

IUMI’s “Flexible Tanks for Liquid Bulk Cargo: Recommended Best Practice” paper together with the three annexes are available to download from <https://iumi.com/opinions/position-papers>.

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For further information contact:

Mike Elsom

Phone +44 7968 196077

Email mike@mikeelsom.com

About IUMI The International Union of Marine Insurance e.V. (IUMI) is a non-profit association established for the purpose of protecting, safeguarding and advancing insurers’ interests in marine and all types of transport insurance. It also provides an essential forum to discuss and exchange ideas, information and statistics of common interest for marine underwriters and in exchange with other marine professionals.

IUMI currently represents 42 national and marine market insurance and reinsurance associations.

International Union of Marine Insurance

Grosse Elbstrasse 36, 22767 Hamburg, Germany

Phone +49 (0) 40 2000 747-0

Email info@iumi.com