Past issues
IUMI Policy Forum

International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code

Brief description

Due to a number of catastrophic total losses of bulk carriers, including tragic loss of lives, and near misses due to liquefaction of certain bulk cargoes with excessive and/or unduly high moisture content, several maritime organisations, IUMI included, have taken an active position in the development of a more efficient regulation through the IMO.

MSC adopted in June 2015 an individual schedule for iron ore fines and amended appendix 2 of the IMSBC Code for the inclusion of "Modified Proctor/Fagerberg test procedure for iron ore fines"; intended to determine the transportable moisture limit (TML) for iron ore fines. A guidance was also adopted along with the amendments, which came into force 1 January 2017.

Member States, inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO are encouraged to make available to the Organization detailed technical information on incidents or casualties resulting from liquefaction.

Following the tragic sinking of "Bulk Jupiter" with the loss of 18 lives in January 2015, the Bahamas Maritime Authority concluded through its marine safety investigation that loss of stability through bauxite liquefaction was the most likely cause. IMO's sub-committee on Carriage of Containers and Cargoes (CCC) agreed in September 2015 to prepare a circular, as an interim measure, containing safety awareness information on the transport of this cargo. Research later found that certain forms of bauxite with a large proportion of smaller particles could be subject to dynamic separation when there is excess moisture in the cargo. Consequently, the sub-committee issued a revised circular that took immediate effect in September 2017.

CCC finalized in September 2016 draft amendments to paragraphs 4.5.1 and 4.5.2 of the IMSBC Code to emphasise the responsibility of the shipper for ensuring that a test to determine the transportable moisture limit of a solid bulk cargo as well as sampling and testing for moisture content are conducted. MSC 98 confirmed the amendments in June 2017 together with the next set of amendments to the IMBSC Code, which will be included in the next scheduled update in 2019 with effect from January 2021.

Relevant authority / organisations and documents

- **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**
  - DSC 16/4/95: "Amendments to IMO's IMSBC Code, including evaluation of properties of Solid Bulk Cargoes", submitted by INTERCARGO, BIMCO, IGP&I and IUMI, 15 July 2011.
  - MSC90/12/3: Bulk carrier casualties caused by cargo liquefaction, submitted by INTERCARGO, ICS, BIMCO, IGP&I and IUMI, 27 March 2012.
  - DSC.1/Circ.66/Rev.1: "Carriage of iron ore fines that may liquefy", 25 October 2012.

- MSC.1/Circ. 1452 on early implementation of amendment 02-13 to the IMSBC Code, approved by MSC 92.
- MSC.1/Circ. 1453 containing the Guidelines for the submission of information and completion of the format for the properties of cargoes not listed in the IMSBC Code and their conditions of carriage in the IMBSC Code, approved by MSC 92.
- DSC.1/Circ.71 "Early implementation of draft amendments to the IMBSC Code related to the carriage and testing of iron ore fines", 15 November 2013.
- MSC.1/Circ. 1454/Rev. 1 containing the Guidelines for developing and approving procedures for sampling, testing and controlling the moisture content for solid bulk cargoes that may liquefy, approved by MSC 95, June 2015.
- CCC 2/5/16: "Safe transport of bauxite in bulk", submitted by Bahamas, 7 July 2015.
- CCC 2/5/21: "Evaluation of properties of solid bulk cargoes, transport of bauxite", submitted by Australia, Brazil, China, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands and BIMCO, 10 July 2015.
- CCC 2/5/22: "Correspondence Group on the evaluation of properties of bauxite", submitted by Australia, Brazil, China, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands and BIMCO, 10 July 2015.
- CCC.1/Circ.2: "Carriage of bauxite that may liquefy", 20 October 2015.
- CCC3/5/1: Report of the Correspondence Group on Evaluation of Properties of Bauxite and Coal, 3 June 2016.
- CCC3/INF.5: Final status Rheolat 2 study: implementation of the transportability test for New Caledonian nickel ores, submitted by France, 28 June 2016.
- CCC.1/Circ.2/Rev.1: Carriage of bauxite which may liquefy.

- **Lloyd's Register in conjunction with Intercargo and UK P&I Club:** IMSBC Code pocket guide, 13 May 2014.
- **DNV GL:** Guideline on Bulk Cargo Liquefaction, 21 October 2015.
- **Bureau Veritas, London P&I Club and TMC Marine:** Operational guidance for vessels that carry cargoes which may liquefy, 4 April 2017.
- **IUMI:**
  - September 2017 IUMI Eye article (by LOC Group) on the latest incoming amendments to the IMSBC Code related to Group A cargoes and their test procedures.
  - February 2017 webinar about Carriage of Group A cargo – Mineral ores prone to liquefaction.

Timeline / important dates

- Schedule in effect in Australia and Brazil from January 2014.
- Schedule in effect for Antigua and Barbuda flagged vessels from 1 July 2014.
- CCC 3: 5-9 September 2016.

- IMSBC amendments (03-13) regarding the individual schedule for iron ore and the new test procedure for iron ore fines: 1 January 2017.
- MSC 97: 21 – 25 November 2016.
- MSC 98: 7 – 16 June 2017.
- Amendments to IMSBC Code as adopted by MSC in June 2017 deemed accepted on 1 July 2018 and enter into force on 1 January 2019. May be applied on voluntary basis from 1 January 2018.
- MSC 101: 5-14 June 2019; adoption of draft amendments to IMBSC Code. Date of expected entry into force: 1 January 2021.

IUMI will:

- Support industry initiatives as appropriate for a more efficient regulation.
- Monitor and inform the membership in consultation with INTERCARGO, ICS, BIMCO & IGP&I.

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