

4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT
LONDON SE1 7SR
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611 Fax: +44 (0)20 7587 3

DSC.1/Circ.66
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CARRIAGE OF IRON ORE FINES THAT MAY LIQUEFY

1 The Sub-Committee on Dangerous Goods, Solid Cargoes and Containers (DSC), at its fifteenth session (13 to 17 September 2010), considered a preliminary report submitted by a Member Government relating to two recent serious casualties in the monsoon season of 2009 and many near misses reported by the ship masters on ships engaged in the carriage of iron ore fines. The Sub-Committee at its sixteenth session (19 to 23 September 2011), further considered a number of submissions from Member Governments and industry groups relating to the development of a schedule for iron ore fines for inclusion into the IMSBC Code. Such discussions have not been finalized.

2 In considering the above, the Sub-Committee concluded that as iron ore fines is not specifically listed in the IMSBC Code:

- .1 there is a need to raise awareness despite the efforts made by the various protection and indemnity clubs and other reporting casualty services, informing of the probable dangers of liquefaction associated with carriage of iron ore fines;
- .2 until a definition of iron ore fines is incorporated into the IMSBC Code and for the purpose of providing reference, the Sub-Committee took note that iron ore fines is considered to be a cargo mainly constituted by iron bearing minerals with a size up to 6.35 mm. If there is a question about the applicability of this circular for a specific particle size distribution of iron ore, advice should be sought from the competent authority of the port of loading;
- .3 iron ore fines may liquefy and should be treated as such, in particular the Master should refer to section 7 of the IMSBC Code, which warns about cargoes that may liquefy;
- .4 if this cargo is shipped with moisture content in excess of its transportable moisture limit (TML) there is a risk of cargo shift, which may result in capsizing;
- .5 the Master should be aware that some shippers have in the past declared this cargo under the "iron ore" schedule in the IMSBC Code, which is classified as a Group 'C' cargo;
- .6 the Master should not accept this cargo for loading unless the moisture content of the cargo indicated in the certificate is less than its TML; and

- .7 the Master should exercise good seamanship and observe current best practice when handling and carrying this cargo, such as the use of specifically designed filters to protect the cargo holds bilge covers to stop the ingress of this fine cargo into the bilge wells. For further guidance, refer to sections 7 and 8 of the IMSBC Code.

3 It should be noted that the sixteenth session of the Sub-Committee established a correspondence group to develop schedules for iron ore fines for inclusion in the IMSBC Code with particular reference to the phenomenon of liquefaction in some types of iron ore fines. Until the new schedule is finalized, competent authorities, shippers and Masters should take into account section 1.3 of the Code. Member Governments and international organizations are invited to submit relevant information regarding the safe handling and carriage of this cargo to this Correspondence Group and the Organization.

4 Member Governments are also invited to bring the above information to the attention of shippers, terminal operators, shipowners, ship operators, charterers, shipmasters and all other entities concerned, requesting that extreme care and appropriate action be taken, taking into account the provisions of relevant IMO instruments when handling and carrying iron ore fines in bulk.

5 This circular supersedes DSC.1/Circ.63.
