



LOADING ASSORTED BREAKBULK CARGOES IN CHINA

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LOADING OF BREAKBULK CARGO IN CHINA CAN BE COMPLEX AND INVOLVE A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT CARGO TYPES ON THE SAME VOYAGE. THESE CARGOES CAN INCLUDE, STEEL CARGO, TRUCKS, TRAILERS AND BAGGED CARGOES

The Club often assists with the appointment of surveyors to help oversee the loading of these assorted breakbulk cargoes. These are precautionary surveys, ultimately for the shipowner's account and can be worthwhile.

These loadings require awareness by the master and crew, with careful thought and questioning of the stowage intentions throughout. There is often a pressure to load the cargo quickly which may not be easy if there are many different cargo types being loaded onto the ship, into different holds, often simultaneously.

General concepts for masters and shipowners to remain aware of include:

- i. Obtaining the stowage plan as early as you can
- ii. Start, as soon as possible, to scrutinise the draft stowage plan. If there is anything inappropriate with the stowage arrangement, then commence enquiries to see if the stowage plan needs to be adjusted
- iii. Actively envisage the stow as it builds. Consider and question any areas of potential non-compliance with the ship's approved cargo securing manual
- iv. The weight of the cargo must comply with both the ship's tank top and hatch cover (if required) weight limits to prevent structural damage
- v. Ask to secure additional lashings if needed
- vi. Weld additional lashing points before loading adjacent cargo whenever necessary. Avoid welding on bunker tank perimeters. Take maximum precautions to prevent heat damage or fire when performing hot work in, above, or adjacent to existing cargo. Follow relevant safety procedures for hot work at all times, and ensure that new lashing points are approved by the ship's flag state
- vii. Avoid high, inadequately supported, "cliff faces" of cargo that might collapse into a void space. This includes considering where the cargo is being discharged and port rotation
- viii. Confirm that vehicles' fuel tanks are empty and electrical batteries are disconnected before loading. If not, consider them as dangerous goods and ensure compliance with the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code.

Typically, it is easier to adjust or improve a stow as the cargo is being loaded, not after when the stevedores can be reluctant to re-visit earlier items and when access to some, already stowed cargoes lower down, can be a challenge. If there is a doubt, ask the questions in a timely fashion.

Keeping conversations with the stevedores and charterer's representatives respectful, can also help to achieve a mutually acceptable stowage outcome.

Please keep in mind that the surveyor is unlikely to be fully familiar with all the details in the ship's cargo securing manual. Cargo securing manuals can have some generic similarities but are often ship specific and the surveyor cannot completely take over the loading supervision on behalf of the master but is there to work with the master and especially to assist linguistically. It is ultimately the ship master's responsibility to ensure the cargo is safely handled, stowed and secured in accordance with the relevant regulations.

IF YOU NEED TO APPOINT A SURVEYOR AT A LOAD PORT IN CHINA TO ASSIST WITH CARGO LOADING, PLEASE CONTACT EITHER THE LOCAL LISTED CORRESPONDENT OR YOUR CLAIMS TEAM AT BRITANNIA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.