

## **NORTH P&I CLUB HIGHLIGHTS RISKS OF EXPLOSIONS DURING CARGO FUMIGATION**

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North P&I Club has published a new free-to-download loss prevention briefing warning its members of the hazards associated with routine fumigation of agricultural products on ships.

The warning follows an explosion of pesticide gases on a panamax vessel, loading corn at Paranagua, Brazil, at the end of December 2015. This resulted in significant structural damage and was one of number of similar incidents reported during the last five years in Brazil and the USA.

According to North's loss prevention director Tony Baker, 'The application of fumigant on vessels carrying cargoes such as grains, seed cakes and logs is common practice. However, failure to disperse the fumigant pellets properly has led to self-heating problems.

'This can cause heat damage to the cargo or ignition and subsequent explosion of high concentrations of fumigant gases. Some of these incidents have been significant enough to lift the vessel's secured hatch covers, resulting in major structural damage.'

Loss prevention deputy director Collin Gillespie says, 'Fumigation should never be conducted by a ship's crew. However, crew members must be made aware of the hazards of fumigation and the risks it poses to human health. They should fully understand the duties of the fumigation company and the responsibilities of the fumigator in charge.'

The new loss prevention briefing, which supplements the International Maritime Organization (IMO) recommendations for safe fumigation of cargo holds (MSC.1/Circ.1264), aims to provide crew members with a practical understanding of the process, its risks and how these can be minimised.

In addition to describing the hazards of pesticide gases, the briefing sets out the responsibilities of the fumigator in charge; procedures for fumigating in port and in transit; and safety measures which should be taken before, during and after fumigation. It also advises shipowners and operators to incorporate a suitable fumigation clause in their charterparties.

'While the incorporation of a fumigation clause will not prevent incidents from occurring, it will help ensure that all fumigation operations are conducted in accordance with IMO recommendations,' says Gillespie. 'The clause also sets out the division of responsibilities regarding fumigation.'

North has recently published more detailed technical guidance on fumigation in its new loss prevention guide *Bulk Cargoes: A Guide to Good Practice*, which is co-authored by Charles Bliault and Martin Jonas of Brookes Bell.

## **ENDS**

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## Notes to Editors

1. North's loss prevention briefing *Fumigation*, together with the club's other briefings, is freely available on its website at <http://www.nepia.com/lp-briefings>.
2. North's loss prevention guide *Bulk Cargoes: A Guide to Good Practice* by Charles Bliault, Martin Jonas and The North of England P&I Association (ISBN 978-0-9574936-3-6) is available from maritime bookshops and online retailers price £60 (US\$10 for Amazon Kindle version).
3. The North of England P&I Association (North) is a leading global marine insurer providing P&I, FD&D, war risks and ancillary insurance to 130 million GT of owned tonnage on a mutual basis and 45 million GT of chartered tonnage. Through its guaranteed subsidiary Sunderland Marine, North is also a leading insurer of fishing vessels, small craft and aquaculture risks. The Standard and Poor's 'A' rated club is based in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK with regional offices in Greece, Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore and Sunderland Marine offices worldwide. North is a leading member of the International Group of P&I Clubs (IG), with 11.6% 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 protects and promotes the interests of the international shipping industry. For further information visit: [www.nepia.com](http://www.nepia.com).