



भारत सरकार/ GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
पोत परिवहन मंत्रालय / MINISTRY OF SHIPPING
नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

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Dated: 07/08/2020

NT Wing Cargo Circular – 01 of 2020

Subject: Maritime advisory for the safe preparation, storage, handling & shipment of dangerous goods – reg.

1. The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 [SOLAS] provides provisions for the carriage of dangerous goods in packaged form and in bulk on ships. The detailed provisions and guidelines for the safe preparation, storage, and handling of transportation and shipment of dangerous goods or hazardous materials are enumerated under International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (i.e. IMDG Code).
2. International regulations prohibit the handling of dangerous goods except in accordance with the provisions of the IMDG Code. Also, the provisions of the SOLAS & IMDG Code requires the issuance of instructions on emergency response procedures and medical first aid relevant to incidents involving dangerous goods, taking into account the guidelines developed by the Organization.
3. The provisions of the IMDG Code for the safe preparation, storage, handling & shipment of dangerous goods needs to be strictly adhered to by all stakeholders (i.e. ships, ports, shippers, stevedores, transport operators, etc.) in order to ensure no incidents occur while dealing with dangerous goods on board ships and in ports.

Non-compliance with the provisions of IMDG Code on board ships or ashore including at warehouses etc could lead to devastating consequences on ships, ports and to its vicinity. The recent explosion at the Port of Beirut, Lebanon, on Aug 4, 2020 is reported to have resulted in the loss of innumerable lives and thousands

injured with substantial numbers being rendered homeless. According to media reports, the explosion is reported to have been caused by the detonation of dangerous goods (i.e. ammonium nitrate) which had been stored at the dock since it was offloaded from a cargo ship. The tragedy at Beirut on 4th August 2020 highlights what happens when dangerous goods are not stored with care, as the explosion is reported to have torn through the city, registering a force as strong as a 3.3 magnitude earthquake with some of the residents claiming that the scenes looked “like an apocalypse” and that the port was “totally destroyed.”

4. An earlier incident involving dangerous goods at a container storage station at the Port of Tianjin, China on August 12, 2015 had resulted in a series of explosions resulting in the loss of lives of a large number of people and injuries to hundreds of others. Reports indicate that fires caused by the initial explosions continued to burn uncontrolled resulting in additional explosions on subsequent dates.

5. An even earlier incident involving dangerous goods at the Port of Texas City, Texas, at Galveston Bay, USA on April 16, 1947, resulted in a fire on board the vessel SS *Grandcamp* and detonation of her cargo of dangerous goods, which started a chain reaction of fires and explosions in other ships and nearby oil-storage facilities leading to the loss of large number of lives and damage to ships and property.

6. Incidents involving dangerous goods may not remain limited to a small area and can have wide ranging impact including vessels, ports and its surrounding areas. To avoid such occurrences during the preparation, storage, handling & shipment of dangerous goods, all stake holders including ships, ports, customs, warehouses, master of vessels, seafarers, stevedores, transporters, etc., are advised to **strictly comply** with the provisions of the IMDG Code including its supplement containing the EmS Guide and Medical First Aid Guide for all cargoes listed as dangerous goods.

7. This is issued with approval of the Competent Authority



(Capt. P.C. Meena)

Nautical Surveyor-cum-DDG (Tech)