



**Circular to all VHT-Members**

re.: Laid-up vessels - tropical storms/hurricanes/typhoons

Dear Sir or Madam,

Owing to the current financial and economic crisis, a part of the merchant fleet is idle and has been laid up worldwide. Many of said ships are laid-up in regions which are regularly struck by tropical storms or hurricanes/typhoons or were laid-up in areas in which same can't be excluded - particularly those ships which lay on anchor in said regions face additional hazards which have to be responded to by using 'good seamen's practice'. Damages resulting from neglecting 'good seamen's practice' do not occur unexpectedly but rather are foreseeable - thus, they don't occur suddenly and unexpectedly.

As the VHT and possibly the hull underwriters, as well, do not have any information about the locations in which our market's vessels have been laid-up, the VHT is recommending that the VHT-members draw their insured's attention to the significant additional risk (as the case may be, even an accumulation risk) resulting from having ships laid-up in such areas. The VHT recommends that the insured in question ensure that, in the case of need, 'good seamen's practice' can and will be observed. The VHT firmly believes that the aforesaid can be achieved in the best possible way by implementing a contingency plan, drawn up by the individual shipping company.

However, the main precondition is that the ship is able to leave the anchorage under her own power at any given time – thus, she must be properly manned, the main propulsion must be in normal working order and the vessel must be sufficiently fuelled etc.

In particular, the contingency plan should clearly deal with and regulate the following:

- In the first place, the anchor position and situation should be chosen in a way that the vessel is able to withstand a 'heavy weather' situation according to a seaman's best judgement.
- The vessel should be manned in a way that she may heave up the anchor and start steaming at any given time.
- The bridge should permanently be manned in accordance with the STCW-regulations at any time while at anchor.
- The weather situation should continuously and reliably be monitored in order to ensure that the vessel will not encounter heavy weather by surprise and that there will in any event be ample time to take the necessary precautionary measures (e. g. to get the vessel into sea state condition).

- It is to be ensured that the vessel can receive the locally broadcasted warnings and instructions reliably and will act accordingly (e.g. adjusting the paid out chain length while observing the weather and traffic situation).
- It is to be ensured that the vessel maintains her anchor position continuously in order to immediately realise if she starts drifting and, as the case may be, to act accordingly.
- It is to be ensured that the actions and/or the possible drifting of other anchored vessels are continuously monitored and that proper action will be taken in case of need.
- It is to be ensured that the prime mover can be made available without restriction to steam within sufficient time.
- It is to be ensured that the vessel's crew can contact a competent shore station at any time and that, in case of need, tug assistance can be ordered within a short period (preferably at readily agreed conditions).

The above list is by no means complete but serves the purpose of a guide line.

As the Far East typhoon season has already started with tropical storms this year, the VHT recommends that the underwriters inform their insured parties as soon as possible about the situation.

Please do not hesitate to contact the VHT in case of any queries regarding this topic.

Hamburg, 2009-05-26  
VHT / Bernd Röder