

# MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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## SAFE CARRIAGE OF COAL CARGOES

### OVERVIEW

On January 1, 2011, the amendments to Chapter VI and Chapter VII of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended, (SOLAS) came into force making the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code mandatory. In addition, the Coast Guard amended regulations in 46 CFR Part 148 governing the carriage of solid hazardous materials in bulk for all domestic and foreign vessels operating in U.S. navigable waters.

### DETAILS

During routine Port State Control exams over the last several months, Sector New Orleans Port State Control Officers (PSCOs) discovered several vessels that were not in compliance with the provisions of the IMSBC Code or 46 CFR 148 for the safe carriage of Coal. As a result, these vessels were subject to international control actions, severe commercial delays and possible civil penalties.

Masters and/or operators of vessels are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that they are in compliance with the provisions of the IMSBC Code and 46 CFR 148 governing the carriage of solid hazardous materials in bulk while in the navigable waters of the United States. Both the IMSBC Code and 46 CFR Part 148.240 require:

1. Prior to loading Coal, the shipper or his appointed agent provide in writing to the master the characteristics of the cargo and the recommended safe handling procedures for loading and transport of the cargo. At a minimum, the cargo's contract specifications for moisture content, sulphur content and size shall be stated, and especially whether the cargo may be liable to emit methane or self-heat.
2. Prior to loading Coal, the master ensure all cargo spaces and bilge wells are clean and dry and all electrical cables and components situated in cargo spaces and adjacent spaces are free from defects. Also, that such cables and electrical components are safe for use in an explosive atmosphere or positively isolated.
3. The ship is suitably fitted and carries on board appropriate instruments for measuring the atmosphere above the Coal for the presence of methane, carbon monoxide, and oxygen. This testing must be performed in such a way that the cargo hatches are not opened and entry into the hold is not necessary.

If you have any questions, please contact the Sector New Orleans Port State Control Branch at 504-365-2361 or via e-mail at [pscnola@uscg.mil](mailto:pscnola@uscg.mil)

  
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