



The P&I Correspondent in Venezuela

Caracas, 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014

## Venepandi's Circular - 006 - Oil pollution in Maracaibo lake

**Most Vessel calling at Maracaibo lake and mainly those calling at PDVSA's terminal there are encountering with an oil firm that isn't being controlled by the Terminal and that is causing ship's hulls to get polluted with black oil.**

We've noted recently an increase in oil spillage from PDVSA terminal (Bajo Grande) at Maracaibo Lake. This is causing that all vessels calling to that terminal or to close areas are getting the hulls stained with black oil. It's important to remark that the harbormaster of Maracaibo doesn't allow any cleaning activity inside the lake for which vessels should go to another Venezuelan port such as Amuay bay or Jose for cleaning the hull. Below you can see some recent press reports regarding the oil spillage on Maracaibo lake:

<http://www.noticierovenevision.net/nacionales/2013/octubre/4/77867=derrame-de-petroleo-en-aguas-del-lago-de-maracaibo-fue-confirmado-por-autoridades-zulianas>

<http://www.venezuelaaldia.com/2013/10/pescadores-denuncian-presuntos-derrames-de-petroleo-en-el-lago-de-maracaibo/>

As pointed out, PDVSA is indeed used to provide with LOI to those vessels that call at their facilities and that gets the hull stained with oil. Most of the times, P&I correspondent liaise with PDVSA for obtaining the LOI and later supervise that the hull is cleaned up to Master satisfaction. It's important to all Master to notify correspondents and to begin preparing a LOP once it is noticed that the hull is getting stained with oil.

The first problem here is that PDVSA only accepts responsibility for the cleaning and as such, we've not found any records of PDVSA accepting claims for demurrage caused for the time spent for cleaning. Of course all vessels administrators have decided historically to clean the ships in order to avoid fines in foreign ports.

Should you have any further question, please don't hesitate on contacting us.

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