

Circular From UK**Date: 27 June 2016****Fraud Prevention - Turkey**

Signum Services would like to update Members on fraudulent activity in relation to bogus cargo.

These frauds always emanate from Turkey and involve criminals purporting to be ship brokers and port agents. We have noted an increase of these fraudulent crimes in the last few months.

The nature of the frauds are that non-existent cargo is offered to ship owners / managers at attractive rates on the general market. The type of cargo offered varies but the favourites are cement, boilers and phosphate.

The terms are always 'Liner In' meaning that the owner must pay up front for any stevedore and berthing costs. The fraudulent broker insists that their own port agents must be used. The money is then paid into the agent's Turkish bank account. The money is immediately withdrawn from the bank and a new account opened for the next victim.

The ship arrives at the port in question only to discover that no cargo is waiting and that the agent does not exist.

The fraudsters use the names of reputable companies as the charterer. These companies have no knowledge that their details are being used. The fraudster will provide details of previous fixings if requested. These are always false. They will also supply a contact name and phone number, allegedly of the charterer if this needed who, when spoken to, will assure the victim that all is in order. This person is in reality not from the charterer but is another member of the criminal team.

It is clear that those responsible for these frauds have a detailed knowledge of the shipping and chartering business. Signum's investigation into these cases continues.

Members are warned to be alert and vigilant if offered such deals.

Source of Information: UK P&I Club