

Circular From NORTH**Date: 22 January 2021**

Caution on Malaysian Clay Cargoes

The last decade has seen several reported instances where bulk clay cargoes loaded in Malaysia liquefied in the holds of the carrying vessel during the voyage.

The recent loss of the XIN HONG serves as a reminder that the risks associated with clay cargoes remain. In the known incidents, the cargoes were loaded at Lumut, Malaysia. They were declared by the shipper as either 'ball clay' (which is not a recognised bulk cargo shipping name in the IMSBC Code) or simply 'clay'.

The IMSBC Code lists CLAY as a Group C cargo, which suggests that it is not liable to liquefy when carried in bulk.

However, experience of clay cargoes loaded at Lumut suggest they possess a flow moisture point (and therefore a transportable moisture limit (TML)), indicating that they are liable to liquefy if its moisture content exceeds the TML.

When loading clay cargoes in Malaysia, exercise great caution and be aware of the risk of liquefaction, even if it has been declared as a Group C cargo.

Can tests are a valuable tool in helping crew determine if a cargo might be unsafe. If a flow state or significant compaction is observed, seek expert advice.

Source of Information: The North P&I Club