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Safety Bulletin 6 /2023

Non-hazardous cargo?



Insight

Hazard identification

Soda ash is a very common bulk cargo, used in the extraction of metals and in the making of paper, glass and soap. It is also used as an additive in various food products and in treatment of textiles.

Soda ash is not considered by most people as a “high-risk” or “hazardous” cargo. It is not assigned to a hazard class within the IMDG Code. Still, it comes with a Material Safety Data Sheet from the shipper. PPE is required, including gloves and goggles for skin and eye protection. Respiratory protection shall also be used “when ventilation is inadequate”. It means that while working in an area where dust is forming, masks shall be used in accordance with the MSDS.

It is one of G2 Ocean’s “Life-Saving Rules” to wear PPE .



1. Wear PPE

Wear Personal Protection Equipment required for the job.

Exposure to chemicals is a known hazard related to this cargo. Towards the end of the discharge of a cargo hold, persons are sometimes inside the hold for sweeping the remaining cargo. On the next page you can see how this has created another hazard.



Aerial view of soda ash discharge.

Dear all,

G2 Ocean is committed to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all personnel involved in our operations. The purpose of our Safety Bulletins is to raise awareness of health & safety risks associated with cargo operations.

G2 Ocean works with several hundred stevedore companies worldwide. We believe that by seeking and sharing insights across company and country boundaries, we can prevent future incidents together. Descriptions of incidents will always be fully anonymised.

This edition of our Safety Bulletin is about challenging perceptions of what is a “non-hazardous” cargo, using soda ash as an example. If you have any feedback, please email us at:

safety@g2ocean.com

Best regards G2 Ocean Team



6. Prevent slips, trips and falls

Keep an eye out for slip, trip and fall hazards.



Not all cargo holds have a perfect «box» shape. A potentially fatal hazard has emerged in the cargo hold, when persons are sweeping the «bench». There is a height of several meters down to the bottom of the hold, and the soda ash makes the surface slippery. The fall risk can be reduced by using:

- A safety harness. The lines may be fixed on deck if there is no anchoring point inside the hold.
- A warning line, to make sure the persons maintain a safe distance to the edge of the bench.



Integration

In G2 Ocean we have **Integration** as one of our desired safety behaviours. We expect this behaviour from our own employees, and everyone we work with. It means that we should have safety in mind always, also when we work with cargo which is not perceived to be “hazardous”.



Consequences:

- Falls are one of the most common causes of fatalities on vessels.
- Potential acute injuries from skin or eye contact with soda ash.
- Potential long-term health impact from inhalation of soda ash dust.



Lesson learned:

- There is no such thing as a “non-hazardous” cargo.
- Use the toolbox talk to identify hazards. Remember that the fall hazards are not static inside the cargo hold. It changes all the time during loading and discharging. Keep an eye out for fall hazards which may emerge during the cargo operations.
- Check the MSDS and wear PPE as required.