We would like to inform Members regarding the potential hazards of loading iron ore/iron ore fines from Buchanan, Liberia and the steps to be taken to ensure the safety of the crew, vessel and cargo.

The export of iron ore/iron ore fines from Buchanan, Liberia has increased during the past year due to the re-opening of the inland mine and export facility following years of civil war. The mine and loading facilities are operated by the same entity who are also usually the shipper and consignee. The export cargo is transported from the mine to the loading facility at the port of Buchanan in uncovered rail wagons and is therefore exposed to the weather elements (rain). This cargo has been known to have a moisture content exceeding the Transportable Moisture Limit (TML), particularly during the rainy season. This in certain instances may lead to liquefaction.

In order to minimise any risk, Members are therefore advised:

• To appoint a P&I surveyor prior to arrival in order to protect the Member’s interests and assist the master.
• Not to commence loading operations until all certificates have been provided by the shipper.
• To perform frequent can tests (with surveyor and shipper) prior to and during loading as set out in the IMSBC code.
• Immediately suspend loading operations if in any doubt over the cargo’s moisture content.
• To request the shipper/local laboratory to conduct additional moisture content analysis as necessary and provide certified results.
• To be extra attentive during the rainy season for ‘wet’ cargo.
• To keep a record/log of all events.
• To bring any abnormalities immediately to the attention of the P&I surveyor and the loading terminal/shipper.

For guidance on the carriage of iron ore/iron ore fines and cargoes that are prone to liquefaction Members should refer to the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code and/or contact the Club.

Source of information: Eltvedt & O’Sullivan, Manager’s Agents for TCI Africa (P&I Correspondents) mail@eltvedtosullivan.com