BULLETIN

Safe loop lashing practice for ships carrying timber deck cargoes

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We would like to advise our Members that Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) has issued a safety bulletin on the safe carriage of timber deck cargoes in order to minimise accidents.

In this bulletin, it has been advised that a number of global incidents have occurred where best practice methods have not been used to secure cargoes. These have resulted in injuries and the loss of cargo overboard. Any lashing practice must be able to overcome the transverse forces generated by the ship’s rolling movement. If the cargo is poorly lashed and the cargo moves during the voyage, it can cause a ship to lose stability.

At present, the top-over lashing is the most common practice for securing timber deck cargoes; however this practice is not recommended for vessels other than those trading in restricted sea areas, inland or sheltered waterways as it is sufficient only when transverse acceleration is very small.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has reviewed its Code of Safe Practice for Ships carrying timber deck cargo. In 2011, the IMO revised regulation 5.4.1 in the Code of Safe Practice for Ships carrying timber deck cargo to include loop lashing as an optional practice to top-over lashing for securing timber deck cargoes since engineering analysis have shown that loop lashing is superior to top-over lashing for security and safety when transporting timber deck cargoes throughout a sea voyage.

MNZ has now recommended loop lashing, as in their opinion, it is the safest and most secure practice for ships carrying timber deck cargoes throughout a voyage. Loop lashings are passed over the top-of-stow in opposing pairs to provide horizontal elements that best prevent the timber deck cargoes racking when considering all conditions at sea.

To secure the timber deck cargoes by loop lashing, the lashing is drawn from the base of one side of the cargo, up and fitted across the top of cargo to a securing point at the top of the stanchion. Alternatively, the lower part of the lashing may be fastened to a securing point on top of the hatch-cover or deck underneath the cargo.

The ‘loop’ is then completed by rigging a second lashing in the opposing direction, so that the two lashings form one structure.

There are three practices of loop lashing that can be used to secure timber deck cargoes. These are:

1. Upright-fixed.
2. Hatch-cover fixed.
3. Deck-fixed.

These three loop lashing practices are each illustrated overleaf.
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1. Upright-fixed
   This is the fastest securing practice. Less securing material and time is involved to secure the timber deck cargoes than with traditional chain and wiggle wire top-over lashing.

2. Hatch-cover-fixed
   This version requires hog lashing to be placed in addition and separately to the opposing pairs of loop lashing.

3. Deck-fixed
   This version is fixed in a similar manner to hatch-cover fixed.

MNZ advise that any of the above loop lashing practices can be used to achieve the best safe practice for transporting timber deck cargoes on a voyage, however the ship’s fittings will be a determining factor for the loop lashing practice that is selected.

For further information and the full wording of the safety bulletin please visit MNZ website.