

## Loading of hot coal at Maputo, Mozambique

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Gard has recently been advised by our Durban correspondents of coal in bulk being loaded with apparently high temperatures at the Matola Coal Terminal in Maputo, Mozambique. It appears that in the course of loading the coal, the cargo in one hold spontaneously combusted. The ship's crew fortunately detected the smouldering of the cargo before loading was completed and all cargo was subsequently discharged from the vessel. Temperatures far in excess of 55°C which is IMO's limit for safe carriage, were recorded during discharge.



Furthermore, we are advised by our correspondents that during the course of their investigations it was noticed that at least one shore dump site was on fire with flames clearly visible and they noted that prior to this incident several other shore dump sites had been observed to be smouldering. This is the first such reported incident at this terminal for at least 5 years, and it appears this latest incident may be associated with unseasonably high winds combined with several months storage of the cargo at the terminal.

It is recommended that, in addition to ensuring that all the requirements set out in the Code of safe practice for solid bulk cargoes (BC Code) are followed, the ship's crew should be particularly vigilant during loading of coal in bulk at Maputo. Last but not least we stress that shipowners must obtain information from the shippers enabling the crew to properly care for the cargo during the voyage. The BC code emphasises that prior to loading, the shippers/his agent should provide the vessel with the characteristics of the cargo in writing together with guidelines as to the safe handling/loading/transport of the cargo. As a minimum requirement, specifications for moisture/sulphur content and size should be submitted, especially where the cargo may be subject to emitting methane or self-heating.

We are grateful to Messrs. P&I Associates Pty. Ltd, Durban for the above information.

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