



Merchant Shipping Directorate



FIRE SAFETY HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH WOOD PELLETS

Information Notice 28

*Notice to Shipowners, Ship Operators, Managers, Masters,
Owners' Representatives and Recognised Organisations*

The Directorate wishes to draw the attention of all concerned to the [Marine Safety Investigation Report No. 26/2017](#). This Report highlights the potential fire safety hazards when carrying cargo in Bulk, particularly to hazards related to the carriage and handling of wood pellets.

It establishes the circumstances and safety factors of an accident as a basis to make recommendations, in order to minimize the risk of such re-occurrences.

Wood pellets are a compressed solid biomass fuel, prone to mechanical and chemical degradation and moisture absorption during handling or storage. Problems can arise when handling large amounts of wood pellets, which ultimately can be the causes of various hazards such as oxygen depletion, increase in carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide generation, even fire and explosions due to the generation of high dust concentration during the loading and unloading operations.

It is important to be reminded that as per IMSBC Code and SOLAS Chapter VI, the responsibility in determining the hazards associated with the transport of cargoes rests primarily with the shipper. The master of a ship cannot be an expert in this respect and his practical ability to assess the safety of any given commodity is heavily reliant upon its description, as furnished by the shipper.

Masters and operators of Maltese registered ships are advised to follow the recommendations contained therein.

Merchant Shipping Directorate

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Malta Transport Centre
Hal Lija LJA 2021, Malta

Tel: +356 2125 0360 Fax: +356 2124 1460
Email: merhipmalta.tm@transport.gov.mt
www.transport.gov.mt/ship-registration



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