

VANCOUVER PORT AUTHORITY, CANADA
28 JULY 2000

A Submission on the effect of Sub-Standard ships on Port Operations.

Attention of Captain Barry McKay

Dear Sirs.

The Vancouver Port Authority would like to thank the International Commission on Shipping (ICONS) for the opportunity to make a submission on the effect of sub-standard ships on port operations. The Port of Vancouver is Canada's largest port and over 70 million tons of cargo move through its terminals every year. With approximately 2500 deep sea vessel calls each year carrying an estimated \$100 million (Canadian) daily, the port is an important economic engine for Canada.

There are a number of readily identifiable areas where port operations and in particular commercial operations are effected by sub-standard ships.

Vessels that fail Port State Control

Sub-standard vessels are more likely than well founded vessels to fail Port State Control (PSC) inspections. Most if not all PSC inspections occur inside port limits. In the last few years as many as 45-50 ships per annum have failed Port State Control in Vancouver. A failure of a PSC inspection at the very least causes a delay for the effected vessel and in most cases a detention. Once the vessel has been detained, it is generally left to the port to find a place for it to remain whilst it is under detention. This has a domino effect. The vessel has to be allocated a berth or anchorage. This berth or anchorage is then not available to other ships doing business in the port. During busy times, other vessels may be delayed or diverted, because of their inability to access berths or anchorages being utilised by detained sub-standard vessels.

Striking Crew Members

It has been Vancouver's experience that sub-standard ships are also more likely to have crew unrest. Unhappy crews may walk off ships causing work stoppages at terminals or abandon ships leaving them undermanned and a risk to the port as a whole. Again it is the port and its terminals that are most impacted by these situations.

Economic Ramifications

Sub-standard vessels that are delayed in port because of PSC detention or crew unrest have an economic impact on the port, its terminals and the other well run ships using the port. The operational objective of a port is to provide for the safe, effective and uninterrupted movement of cargo. A delayed vessel has a significant impact on this objective and may result in economic hardship for innocent third parties.

Environmental Issues

Ports such as the Port of Vancouver, that place a high value on the environment, usually have procedures in place to mitigate potential pollution from vessels. These include inspections of Engine room bilges, ballast discharges, bunkering and hold washing. A pollution spill in the confined waters of a port can have a devastating effect on both the environment and the economy of the port.

Potentially, sub-standard vessels present a higher risk of polluting than well-founded ships. They therefore require a higher level of vigilance and inspection from the port.

Navigational Hazards

As with the environment, sub-standard vessels pose a higher navigational risk from machinery failure at critical points or failure to provide a satisfactory level of watch keeping. This is somewhat mitigated by the use of experienced local pilots, but again ports and their stakeholders are at risk from poorly maintained vessels.

The Holistic Approach

Ports and their stakeholders are at an economic risk from sub-standard ships. Economic issues must be considered in addition to the human aspects. All stakeholders including local port authorities must be involved in the development of strategies to deal with sub-standard vessels.

- Any improvements to the Port State Control and detention system should be reviewed to ensure they do not inadvertently penalise innocent third parties.
- Ports that earn a reputation for dealing humanely and responsibly with exploited crews and sub-standard vessels should be supported, and not left to deal with the economic impact.

In conclusion, sub-standard vessels and the present methods of dealing with them, have an impact on operations in local ports such as the port of Vancouver. In the future, a more holistic approach should be utilised that allows for more stakeholder participation and that supports ports and terminal operators that deal responsibly with sub-standard vessels.

Thank you for your consideration.

J. Gordon Houston
Vice President, Operations
Vancouver Port Authority