

**The Britannia Steam Ship
Insurance Association Limited**

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Issue 01/07
January 2007

TO ALL MEMBERS
Sent by fax /email

Hot Rolled Steel Coil contaminated by Asbestos at Bayuquan, China

The Association has become aware of problems involving asbestos contamination of hot rolled steel coils and the consequential risk of contamination of other steel products loaded at the port of Bayuquan, China.

We are informed that while the steel coils are still hot, they are stored on timber dunnage overlaid with asbestos cloth matting. The coils become contaminated by asbestos cloth sticking to the steel. The contamination is in the form of visible pieces of asbestos cloth debris sticking to the coils, a visible woven cloth pattern imprinted on the steel surface and, inevitably given the nature of asbestos fibres, a non-visible microscopic contamination. Contamination by asbestos requires stringent cleaning to make the cargo safe to carry.

We understand that attempts have been made on the dockside by Shippers to clean the steel coils with electric grinders, however, this is not an effective method. Instead, the steel should be cleaned with vacuum cleaners with HEPA filters. When cleaned by grinding only, there is a risk of increasing non-visible contamination and also causing cross-contamination as microscopic asbestos fibres may be blown across to other cargoes in the vicinity. The dockside floor has also been left contaminated by visible pieces of asbestos cloth probably due to previous batches of steel stored on the dockside and by the attempted cleaning by grinding. Tarpaulin sheets used to

cover the steel coils have also become contaminated. We are aware of 75 contaminated coils presented for shipment following cleaning in this way.

In view of the risks associated with the carriage of cargo contaminated by asbestos, Members are advised to consider whether steel cargoes should be loaded from this port.

Should Members' ships be fixed to load steel at the port of Bayuquan, please immediately notify the Association and our correspondents in Hong Kong, Sureness Marine Services Limited. A suitable asbestos expert will be appointed to certify that the cargo is asbestos free or to comment otherwise. The costs of the asbestos expert will be met by the Association.

Please ensure that this matter is brought to the attention of the relevant staff within your organisation.