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## THE SAFE USE OF PESTICIDES IN SHIPS

Notice to operators, shipowners, charterers, masters, agents, port and harbour authorities, shippers, container and vehicle packers, cargo terminal operators, fumigators and fumigant and pesticide manufacturers and all persons responsible for the unloading of freight containers

*(This notice supersedes Merchant Shipping Notice M.1534 and takes immediate effect)*

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**This Merchant Shipping Notice is an integral part of the Merchant Shipping (Carriage of Cargoes) Regulations 1997<sup>1</sup>. It supersedes Merchant Shipping Notice No.1534 setting out the conditions for the use of pesticides in the cargo spaces of ships in accordance with regulation 8 of these Regulations.**

### *Summary*

The purpose of this Merchant Shipping Notice under the Merchant Shipping (Carriage of Cargoes) Regulations 1997 is to specify:

- (1) The requirements for the safe use of pesticides in cargo spaces on board ships when loaded or intended to be loaded with any cargo, with the exception of liquids in bulk or gases in bulk.
- (2) The relevant aspects of the IMO Recommendations on the Safe Use of Pesticides in Ships which are mandatory for the purposes of (1) above.

1. In accordance with the Merchant Shipping (Carriage of Cargoes) Regulations 1997, where pesticides are used in the cargo spaces of ships prior to, during, or following a voyage, the IMO publication "RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE SAFE USE OF PESTICIDES IN SHIPS" (1996 Edition, IMO267E), available from IMO, Publications Section, 4 Albert Embankment, London SE1 VSR where relevant thereto shall be complied with. The contents of this publication are also incorporated into the Supplement to the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code. The use of pesticides includes the fumigation of cargo spaces and of cargo, in port, or in-transit, and any part of the ship or cargo so affected as a consequence of their application or use, as referred to in the Recommendations. The Regulations cover all

cargoes, including bulk cargo except for liquids and gases in bulk and the further exclusion of dangerous goods, where these are covered by the IMDG Code and the Merchant Shipping (Dangerous Goods and Marine Pollutants) Regulations 1997.

2. Fumigation which is to continue during a voyage must only be carried out with the agreement of the ship's master. The master may choose to allow an in-transit fumigation only after first referring to the requirements of the ship's own national administration. The proposed fumigation process must be acceptable to the administration of the state of the vessel's next port of call or destination. If these approvals have not been received, the fumigation process must not be undertaken. In any event, prior to the arrival of the vessel

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<sup>1</sup> S.I. 1997/No.19 as amended

- and in general not less than 24 hours in advance, the Master must inform the Port Authorities of the port of destination and ports of call that a fumigation in transit is being carried out.
3. Where fumigation in transit is undertaken on short sea voyages, it is likely that the fumigant tablets may not have fully decomposed before arrival at the discharge port. In such cases, when the presence of personnel in cargo spaces is required, it is important that adequate respiratory protection (e.g. self-contained compressed air breathing apparatus) is worn until all fumigant residues have been removed and the spaces have been thoroughly ventilated.
  4. Responsibility for the fumigation process, including, if appropriate, the provision of means to remove any residues, lies with the fumigator. However, where fumigation in transit is to take place, the responsibility to provide safe working conditions on board ship rests with the master. He must ensure that at least two members of his crew including one officer have received the appropriate training. They must be familiar with the recommendations of the fumigant manufacturer concerning the methods of detection of the fumigant in air, its behaviour and hazardous properties, symptoms of poisoning, relevant first-aid and special medical treatment and emergency procedures.
  5. If fumigant tablets are applied to a cargo in a retrievable form, their residues, whether completely spent or not, must be immediately removed from the cargo spaces upon arrival at the discharge port. In cases where no means of retrieval are provided, a vessel must not discharge her cargo until safe working conditions have been established both on board the vessel and ashore where the receiver must make provision for receiving partially decomposed tablets. Under no circumstances are residues to be removed from ships' cargo spaces or from cargo transport units during the voyage, or disposed of overboard at sea.
  6. Some of the gases and other agents commonly used for fumigation are flammable and, unless used strictly in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, may create a fire hazard. All the recommended fumigants are highly toxic and must be used only by qualified operators. It should be noted that because the Threshold Limit Values (TLV) for vapours in air (Annex 2 to the Recommendations refers) are based on a normal eight hour day, they do not provide precise divisions between "safe" and "dangerous" concentration levels for the seafarer. Therefore, it is important that exposure to fumigation agents is kept to a minimum practicable level and below the TLV<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> In the United Kingdom the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988 and the associated Health & Safety Executive Approved Code of Practice "Control of substances hazardous to health in fumigation operations" refers to the Maximum Exposure Limit (MEL) and the Occupational Exposure Standard (OES).

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