

**Human Element Maritime Enhancement Tool (H.EL.M.E.T)****HELMET ELEMENT 10.2****Item 2 “Preparation of loading/unloading plan”**

FINDING: During an onboard HELMET assessment, our HELMET Assessor observed that the air vents of cargo/ballast hold No. 4 were kept closed during de-ballasting.

The initially anchored vessel started de-ballasting in order to proceed to the terminal for loading. However, no action was taken to open the air vents of the cargo/ballast hold No. 4.

After examining the company’s procedure for de-ballasting and the pre-de-ballast checklist, the Assessor ascertained that there was no guideline regarding the air vents.

IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Keeping the air vents closed while the cargo/ballast hold is emptied results in the decrease of the pressure inside the hold, thus to the creation of vacuum. This situation can cause severe damage to the deck structure and the hatch cover of the hold.

Similar damage can occur if the vents are closed during ballasting, due to the reverse situation, thus due to very high pressure that is not being relieved.

SUGGESTION

It has to be clearly stated in the SMS that all segregated and permanent ballast hold air vents need to be opened prior to any de-ballasting and ballasting operation. Additionally, the relevant checklists need to include that step, but also to remind the crew to check on the vents soon after the initiation of the operation to confirm their proper functionality. Finally, each ballast operation needs to be planned in advance by the Chief Officer and included in the Cargo Loading and Discharging Plan, which must be approved by the Master. As best practice, each vessel must produce a standard plan for a complete change of ballast.

Notice: Tip of the month is circulated by P@S monthly in an effort to inform the industry of the red flags raised from the implementation of our onshore and onboard HELMET risk assessment program to meet highest standards, carried out by H.EL.M.E.T. Assessors.

Prevention at Sea Ltd

52 Arch. Makariou III Ave., Ydrogios Tower
6017 Larnaca, Cyprus
Tel: +357 24819800

PREVESEA

91 Ak Miaouli Str.,
85 38 Piraeus, Greece
Tel: +30 210 6437637

✉ info@preventionatsea.com
🌐 www.preventionatsea.com

