

Overview

The P&I IG issued advice on past long detentions of vessels in Mexican Waters during 2022 and 2023. Most of the Bulk Carriers which were detained in Mexican waters took cargo (petroleum coke) from Colombian Ports bound for Altamira Port and Veracruz (both at the Gulf of Mexico side). Drug smuggling into containers occurred in 2022 in Ensenada and Lázaro Cárdenas (the Pacific coast).

Guidance

- If searches are carried out by the authorities at the Loading port then the inspection report or written official evidence of the inspections outcomes should be obtained and kept onboard by the Ship's master.
- If the vessel is a bulk carrier, certificates of empty cargo holds prior loading and certificates of cargo hatches sealing upon completion of loading operations should be obtained.
- Permanent monitoring of places where people (stevedores) are laboring should be maintained at both ports.
- Keep permanent watch over the main deck and boat decks. Areas such as the forecastle, poop deck, main decks, boat decks, etc. should be well lit at night.
- Watch for the approach of small boats or the presence of unauthorized divers or other attempts by unauthorized persons to board the vessel.
- If the vessel suspects that illegal substances may be hidden on board or if a search reveals the presence of drugs, the local authorities, owners/managers, port agents and the local P&I correspondent should be contacted immediately.

! Important to note

Anti-narcotics hull inspection in Mexican waters are carried out by the **Mexican Navy**/Army rather than by private diving companies appointed by the vessels. The Mexican Navy performs the underwater inspection randomly, commonly to those vessels coming from South and Central American ports. Please note that it is up to the Mexican Navy sole discretion to grant and perform the hull's underwater inspection for anti-narcotic purposes. Please also note that the outcomes of underwater inspections carried out prior to or after berthing in Mexican Ports do not prevent the Mexican Authorities to subject the vessel to investigations if drugs are found.

It is not common that the hull of vessels departing from Mexican ports are underwater inspected. However, Vessel Owners can apply for hull underwater inspection by filing an application before the Mexican Navy through the local ship's agents.

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