

Summary of the Detention Case 25-04-2015

General

Ground for detention

The vessel was detained due to the following detainable deficiency:

07106 Fire detection and alarm system - CARGO HOLD SMOKE DETECTION SYSTEM MALFUNCTION (ERROR) FOUND IN NO.10 CARGO HOLD.

Dispute

The flag State did not agree with the detention by the port State Authority and expressed views that:

1. The smoke detection system was actually in working order at the time of inspection. The alarms on the smoke detection system occurred were due to drop in pressure in the sampling line when hatches being lifted off cargo hold No. 10;
2. The report of "Statutory Observation" by the RO also confirmed working order of the smoke detection system; and
3. Therefore it is considered that the ship was safe to proceed to sea.

Based on the above, the flag State is of the opinion that the detention was not justified.

The port State Authority is of the opinion that:

1. Without additional information/explanation, error/malfunction of smoke detector itself would be considered a non-compliance or substantial deterioration of fire detection system;
2. The ship officer appeared not understand the reason of the malfunction and was unable to reset the system;
3. The ship's crew did not pay appropriate attention to the deficiency and did not take necessary corrective measure or action; and
4. In accordance with the "Guidelines for the Detention of Ships" provided in Appendix 2 to IMO Resolution A.1052(27), absence, non-compliance or substantial deterioration of fire detection system would be a detainable item.

Based on the above, the detention was correct.

Opinions of the panel

The panel members reviewed the relevant information and materials received. As the result of evaluation, panel members reached general opinions as follows:

1. Although fire detection system is one of the items listed in the Appendix 2 – "Guidelines for the Detention of Ships" to Resolution A.1052(27), it doesn't mean that any deficiency relating to fire detection system should be detainable deficiency, for which the ship should be detained;

2. Given that cargo operations were underway, and that clearly, cargo was being worked in No. 10 cargo hold, there is always the risk of a spurious alarm, further investigation should have been carried out prior to taking the final step of detention;

3. As the error was found only for cargo hold No.10, it was not a complete malfunction of the entire detection system, but more an isolated instance;

4. It is noted that the PSCO did try to allow the deck officer to resolve the deficiency, but this did not work. There also seems to be a lack of urgency to resolve the deficiency from the ship's crew until the detention (Code 30) was given; and

5. Based on the facts that there was no repair or corrective action taken for the said equipment and that the survey report by the RO confirmed working order of the fire detection system, it would not be appropriate to make the conclusion of substantial deterioration of the fire detection system.

Conclusion

The panel members are of the unanimous opinion that the decision of detention was not justified. Therefore, the port State Authority would be asked to re-consider the decision of the detention to downgrade the code from 30 to 17. In accordance with the guidelines for the detention review panel adopted by the Committee, the port State Authority is also invited to inform the Secretariat of its position regarding the recommendation of the review panel within 30 days.

Although the panel members did not support the detention for this specific deficiency, panel members do expressed common views that:

1. The ship crew did not respond to the fault appropriately as they were either not aware of the characteristics of the system or could possibly be aware that this is a common problem that does not require any repair;

2. The crew onboard did not fully understand that Cargo Hold Smoke Detection System is designed with the purpose of helping the duty deck officer with the regular fire patrol and not to replace his/her responsibilities. It serves as a means to detect a fire in the space of origin in order to provide alarm for safe escape and fire-fighting activity; and

3. Therefore, it appears that there may have been a case for an ISM related deficiency to be raised in this situation around familiarization of equipment.