



# Circular

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## **UPDATE: ATTENTION FERRY USERS. DANGEROUS GOODS DECLARATIONS MUST BE CORRECT.**

On 15 April we advised the NZ Shipping Federation made contact to raise a very serious non-compliance issue where there have been multiple cases of operators submitting DG declarations and information to ship/ferry operators that does not match what is being transported and/or its location on the vehicle.

The following article was recently published and is a good indicator of how authorities view this topic.

It is advisable to ensure DG documentation meets expectation.

# Fear of fire sparks call for stricter policing of dangerous goods on inter island ferries

Amanda Cropp05:00, Apr 25 2019



SCOTT HAMMOND/STUFF

Trucks carrying dangerous goods on inter island ferries can expect more scrutiny following complaints from the Shipping Federation about sloppy safety practices.

Fears that dangerous goods could cause fires on inter island ferries have prompted the Shipping Federation to lobby for stricter policing of transport operators.

Federation chief executive Annabel Young said ferry companies were concerned about trucks carrying undeclared or incorrectly labelled dangerous goods.

Some truckies were caught attempting to take undisclosed dangerous goods on regular sailings, instead of catching early morning freight runs which carry fewer passengers, but allow cargo deemed higher risk.

Young said ferry operators came across problems with dangerous goods by chance and were worried about what else they were missing through lack of pre-boarding inspections.

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"We've complained about it for years, finally it was getting to the point where we're thinking that this is really serious and we're sick of being brushed off, so we've escalated it."

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ALAN O'BRIEN/STUFF

The Shipping Federation is concerned trucks carting dangerous goods have attempted to board regular sailings instead of special early morning freight runs which carry few passengers.

Following recent meetings with the NZ Transport Agency, Maritime New Zealand, WorkSafe and the Environmental Protection Agency, Young said KiwiRail, which runs InterIslander services, and Bluebridge Cook Strait Ferries agreed to report any dangerous goods issues to the agencies.

She was aware of at least half a dozen reports over the past month - "enough incidents to be severely troubled" - and it appeared some dispatchers were not properly trained in dangerous goods documentation.

"The ship's master has the right to rely on the shipping documents provided by the trucking company.

"Some things have to be on the top deck because they cannot be in an enclosed space, some things can't be put next to each other.

"A simple example is a trailer load of hay which can spontaneously combust, so you don't want to put that next to volatile gases."



SUPPLIED

Inter island ferries have limits on dangerous goods such as corrosives, flammable liquids and solids, gases and toxic substances.

Local ferry operators were also mindful of the number of fires on roll-on roll-off ferry vehicle decks overseas, said Young.

In a recent article on its website, international transport industry insurer TT Club said it was estimated that a major container ship fire at sea occurred on average every 60 days, and there had already been four major cargo-related fires this year.

TT Club said its records indicated that 66 per cent of incidents related to cargo damage could be attributed to poor practice in the overall packing process, including cargo identification, declaration, and documentation.

Interislander general manager operations Mark Thompson said KiwiRail staff checked paperwork before loading to ensure it matched what was declared when the booking was made.

"If discrepancies are found by our terminal staff or ship crew, we will not carry the freight until it is corrected and we're satisfied that it complies. This means that on occasion, we do reject cargo from sailings."

KiwiRail decided about a year ago that it would no longer carry class one explosives on rail or its ships - with the exception of small ammunition - because restrictions around transport of these items made it costly and disruptive, and the amount being carried was steadily declining, said Thompson.

He was unaware of any serious incident in recent history resulting from carriage of dangerous goods on InterIslander vessels, but said he would support any move to improve enforcement of the regulations.

No one from Bluebridge was available to comment and Maritime NZ declined to answer questions until after a cross agency meeting later this month to "define the nature and magnitude" of the issue.

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Police acting national manager road policing inspector Peter McKennie said that as a result of concerns raised, police were paying additional attention to the transporting of dangerous goods which posed potential safety risks on the ferries and on the road network in general.

"Police have always carried out random safety checks on commercial vehicles, including dangerous goods carriage compliance. This is conducted anywhere on the road network, not just at ferry terminals. We do not have a permanent presence at ferry terminals."

Following an approach from the Shipping Federation, the Transport Forum reminded its members that drivers needed appropriate dangerous goods endorsements on their licences, and chief executive Nick Leggett said they also had to ensure their paperwork was in order.

"Our message to our members is that [spot checks] are very likely to happen more frequently and that they should comply with the law and do what is right."

Mainfreight group managing director Don Braid said their Chemcouriers business moved a lot of dangerous goods and he had no concerns about increased inspections before trucks embarked on ferries.

"If it catches out those that are disobeying the laws, then so be it."

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