



The P&I Correspondent in Venezuela

Caracas, 4th October 2013

Venepandi's Circular - 001 - 10/04/13 - Port congestion in Puerto Cabello

Given the current Venezuelan economic situation, most of public and private entities are substituting national production and export of products for imports which is causing an important increase of port activities and traffic which represents significant ports congestion and mainly in the port of Puerto Cabello.

The increase of commercial disputes between ship-owners and charterers caused by the port congestion at Puerto Cabello has brought up our attention in order to explain the current situation at the port and our advices based on this situation.

Because of the heavy traffic of vessels nominated to call at Puerto Cabello, the line-up's waiting time for vessels expecting to load and/or discharge at this port has increased exponentially over the recent years in which we've noted that some vessels waiting for berths availability have been for even two months in worst cases with an average of 2-3 weeks.

Depending on the agency nominated, the type of vessel and the nature of the cargo, the waiting time might be less considering that there are berths with more activities (those destined of import of food products). In case the products subject to shipment are refrigerated perishables, it's highly recommended taking the port congestion into consideration in order to avoid any cargo loss due this situation.

It's also recommended verifying at least once the hull's condition in order to avoid the fouling appearing during the ship's stay that could reduce the vessel performance during travel. We've noted that some companies are overcharging vessels for underwater inspection and hull, propeller, sea chest inlets, etc. cleanings, for which we also recommend to seeks for second opinions and quotations with correspondent or protective agents when seeking for companies to conduct these services.

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