



Buenos Aires, 27th March 2023

**CIRCULAR 048/2023 – ARGENTINE CUSTOMS –
SHIP’S STORE LIST DECLARATION (Update)**

Dear All,

Updating the current situation related to ship’s store list declaration, you may recall from our Circular 014/2018 that, in the past, we have issued several circulars related to problems encountered in Argentina in relation to customs fines and for payments required by customs officers when the vessels were visited by the Argentine Customs. They often alleged discrepancies between the store list presented upon arrival and those searching gangs’ findings.

All these problems were, mainly, because there was not any existing form which could give some uniformity as to what should or should not be declared upon arrival.

The above gave room, not only to frequent heavy fines to be levied in a country with fiscal voracity, but also to corruption.

Throughout the years, together with local and international entities, efforts were made in obtaining a clear and uniform declaration form which could help to reduce all the above problems.

In 2018, the Customs Authorities issued General Resolution 4317 approving new forms related to the store list declaration to be presented by ships upon arrival to any Argentine port which entered into force in October 2018. One of the main sources of this new Resolution is the FAL Convention (Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic 1965) that was incorporated by Argentina under the Law Nr. 20.050.

The relevant forms were included in our Circular 014/2018 for easiest reference (enclosed hereto).

The above regulation gave, effectively, more uniformity to the items which should be declared upon arrival - as for example spare parts and/or own elements of the vessel such as grabs which created problems in the past are not mentioned therein.

The new regulation, combined possibly with other factors, such as the political and other external circumstances (e.g. Covid 2019 pandemic) resulted on a radical drop in cases reported arising out of the Customs ship’s store searching gangs in the period 2019 to 2022, reaching NIL compared to the various cases per week arising before.

However, recently, we have seen some disputes arising with Customs House, particularly in the ports of San Nicolas and Campana. The cases seemed to arise out of actual



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inaccurate declaration and so far appear isolated cases. However, in some cases implied an order by the Customs House to seize the non-declared goods which may bring significant costs and delays to the vessel. We have also received some reports suggesting that facilitation payments would have been demanded by the officers.

Therefore, following the experience gained since 2018 when the new forms were issued, we would like to remind to the Clubs and their Members our recommendations:

1) That the Master jointly with Chief Officer and Chief Engineer carefully record and revise what is declared on the “store list”. Normally, only the information requested in the Customs Forms shall be filled in (OM 1645: OM 1646: OM 1647: OM 1648).

2) That quantities to be declared in relation to the engine form are carefully checked by the Chief Engineer.

2.1.) In relation to the lubeoils – one the main elements of dispute – the current practice, in general, is to include all measurable lubeoils, including drums, cans, all tanks such as M/E, Aux. Eng., sump tanks, hydraulic systems, etc converted into liters under the sole item “Lube Oil” on the Engine section of the form OM 1645 Ship’s Store Declaration. It is advisable to measure the consumables as close as to the port as possible to avoid discrepancies arising out of consumption.

3) That the store list is not signed until the time that Master ensures that everything has been completed and revised.

4) A copy of the store list as presented and received/signed by customs is kept onboard (or the copy sent electronically via email if/as applicable).

5) That Master does not entertain himself in any discussion with Customs in relation to “cash payments” to avoid fines.

6) That he immediately contacts the concerned P&I correspondent in case of any doubts/problems during the visit of the Argentine Customs Search gang.

We would like to stress that so far the cases have been seldom and with no specific trend. However, considering these took place after a long time remaining silent, it is timely to remain this issue which could result in problematic and expensive disputes.

Whilst so far the inspections carried out by the Customs Searching Gang continue to be limited, the Master and C/E shall ensure that all store lists are completed fully and accurately, as this may change at any time and searching gang appear without prior notice.

As this guideline has a general purpose only, the relevant ship’s agents shall be consulted in every case and advise sought from them accordingly.



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Should you require any clarification and /or additional information in relation to this circular and/or attached forms please do not hesitate in contacting us.

Yours faithfully,

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Encls.
Circular 014/2018.