



SAFETY ALERT: COLD WEATHER

The weather has an influence on the safety of the crew on board. Certainly, during the winter, fog, snow and frost have a negative influence. In addition, the days are shorter which affects sight and fatigue of the crew.



POSSIBLE DANGERS

- Falling ice from bridges, locks, ships, etc.
- Falling into cold water can cause for a shock and freezing, wearing a lifejacket is therefore of even greater importance.
- Vents of ballasttanks can freeze and therefore cause for damage to the barge.
- Bigger chance of slipping, tripping and falling because of slipperiness.
- Slipperiness on stairs.
- Ice can influence the course of the barge and make maneuvering more difficult.
- Thick floes can cause for damage to hull, bow thruster, and rudders.
- Water in the ballasttanks can freeze and defrost which can have an influence on the stability.

MEASURES

- Walk calmly and use the anti-slip paths, keep the paths clear from snow and ice and mark them clearly, strew salt in case of snow.
- Wear appropriate PPE and wear them correctly (footwear against slipping, helmet against falling ice, lifejacket against drowning, winter clothing against freezing).
- Make sure there is enough lighting on deck.
- Rotate the crew more often when they are working in the cold.
- Discuss the hazards, measures and relevant emergency procedures with the crew and any visitors.
- Spray locks with graphite.
- Check heating systems on proper functioning; do not shut off heaters.
- Cover anchor winch, ropes and wires and keep coverplates of hawse pipes ice-free.
- When at locks, go to the front early. Pay attention at locks with a 'lift door', icicles can fall down when passing under.
- Start the engines early on and let them get to temperature.
- Tap pumps, pipes, hoses and watertaps and protect them against freezing.
- Keep bilges in holds and engineroom(s) empty.
- Check engines with closed cooling water systems on anti-freeze.
- Keep batteries filled and under voltage.
- Keep fueltanks and lubricant oil tanks that are against the hull as full as possible (condensation).
- Check before loading/discharging the loading pumps on flow and check the clocks on rotation considering freezing.
- Be sure that there is enough fuel in case there is a delay underway or when loading/discharging is prohibited because of ice.
- Local authorities can enforce convoy sails on certain waterways. Make sure to be aware of the latest local guidelines as well as your predecessor.
- Take into account that there are more passenger vessels. Communicate clearly with all vessels.
- Add to additives to diesel fuel in deck engines/day tanks to prevent solidification of the paraffin in the diesel fuel.
- Do not force anything when fixing things, the material (steel, brass and plastic) can get brittle.
- Thick ice can cause damage in the hull. Regular monitoring for leaks from engine rooms, cargo tanks, etc. is recommended.

References/Sources:

Several sources in the industry.