

PORT AGENCY – Syllabus

SHIPS

Thoroughly understand the fundamental differences between dry bulk cargo ships, general-purpose ships, liners (container, breakbulk and ro-ro) and tankers, including ore/oil and ore/bulk/oil carriers. (Students may be expected to produce sketches.)

Understand that tankers sub-divide into several categories including carriers for crude oil, petroleum products, chemicals, liquid gases, vegetable oils etc.

Be aware of size ranges of bulk-carriers including Capesize, Panamax and Handysize.

Understand the purpose and basic design and construction features of decks, holds, hatches, derricks, winches, cranes and other cargo-handling gear. Be aware of ballasting and ballast systems.

Thoroughly understand the terminology of measuring ships including pseudo-tonnages – NT and GT. Actual tonnages – deadweight (dwat and dwcc) displacement (total and light). Capacities – bale cubic and grain cubic, teu lanes metres.

Understand what information is contained in General Arrangement, Capacity and Stowage Plans.

CARGOES AND TRADE ROUTES

This subject should interlink with the section on ships so that students understand how particular ship types are required for the different cargoes and trade routes.

Thoroughly understand the basic characteristics of the main five commodities namely coal, ore, grain, fertilisers and oil. Be aware of the different subdivisions within these categories. Understand the hazards associated with the transport of certain commodities.

Understand the main places of origin and appropriate trade routes of other important cargoes plus any seasonal variations. Have a working knowledge of distances and voyage times.

A good grounding in maritime geography and access to an atlas is essential for this part of the syllabus.

REGISTRATION, CLASSIFICATION AND SURVEYS

Thoroughly understand the reason for ships to be registered and understand the differences between national flag, offshore registries and flags of convenience. Understand the advantages and disadvantages associated with each type of registration.

Thoroughly understand the reason for ships to be classed and understand the role and function of classification societies with the names and locations of the principal societies. Be aware of the role of the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS). Understand the use of classification society register books. Be aware of class maintenance programmes and class surveys.

Understand the role, function and possible impact of port state control. Be aware of ships' necessary adherence to the ISM Code, how it is applied and is audited.

Understand the role, function and possible impact of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and of local trade unions.

Understand the purpose of and procedures for other surveys including on-/off-hire, pre-loading, bunkers and draft surveys.

PORT AGENCY OPERATIONS

Thoroughly understand the importance of marketing the agency and of identifying principals, getting and keeping their business.

Understand the extent of the agent's tasks and responsibilities in relation to port services including port and terminal operators, pilotage and towage companies, stevedores, dockers and riggers.

Thoroughly understand the services required by the ship's Master and other personnel including bunkers, stores for deck and engine-room departments, victualling, servicing of ship's equipment and navigational aids. Medical and dental treatment for crew including hospitalisation and maintaining contact with hospitalised crewmen left behind by the ship.

Be aware of the importance of the master's cash requirements and the precautions necessary with large amounts.

Understand the role of port community computer systems and their increasing importance in port agency.

SHIP DOCUMENTATION

Understand thoroughly the basics of clearing the ship with statutory authorities including customs, port health and immigration. Although examinations will, of necessity, deal with this subject in a manner which ignores any specific country, students may find local examples will enhance their answers.

Be aware of the problems of smuggling, drug trafficking and illegal immigration. Understand that some countries take action against the agent in cases of such transgressions.

Understand the agent's role in signing crew on and off and the responsibility for repatriation. Thoroughly understand the reasons for and procedure of Noting Protest.

Thoroughly understand the reason for, validity and importance of ships' certificates including, Ships Register; loadline certificate; safety construction, safety equipment and safety radio certificates; international oil pollution prevention certificate; de-ratisation certificate. Be aware of who issues these different documents.

CHARTER PARTIES

Thoroughly understand the basic differences between time and voyage charter parties and the effect of these differences upon the agent. Be aware of the suitability of particular forms to different trades.

Understand the general format common to all charter parties but thoroughly understand those clauses which have a direct impact upon the port agent.

Be aware of aids to charter party interpretation including Voylay Rules 1993 and FONASBA Time Charter Interpretation Code 2000.

Understand the basics of the respective responsibilities of owners and charterers.

Be aware of extended contracts including consecutive voyages and contracts of affreightment.

PORT WORKING DOCUMENTATION

Thoroughly understand the concept of the 'arrived ship' and the vital importance of tendering Notice of Readiness and precautions to be taken to minimise disputes.

Understand how statements of facts and timesheets are compiled. Students should be able to prepare a timesheet and calculate demurrage/despatch money.

CARGO DOCUMENTATION

Thoroughly understand the importance of bills of lading in Port Agency with especial emphasis on the problems arising from the delivering of cargo without bills of lading being presented.

Understand the functions of a bill of lading and its role in international trade. Be aware of the effect of the UK Carriage of Goods by Sea Act 1992 or other national legislation on bills of lading.

Understand the practical purpose and effect of Hague, Hague-Visby or Hamburg Rules. Be aware of rules affecting combined transport including those compiled by UNCTAD and the International Chamber of Commerce.

Understand the differences between basic port-to-port bills of lading, through bills of lading, combined transport bills of lading and sea waybills. Understand the import of the main clauses especially those with an impact upon the port agent.

Understand the agent's role in issuing bills of lading at loading port and his responsibility in the avoidance of fraud. The meaning of the expression 'clean' and 'dirty' when applied to bills of lading. The problems arising from 'dirty' bills of lading including the use and misuse of letters of indemnity.

Understand the role and purpose of other cargo documents including booking notes, shipping notes, mates' receipts, dangerous cargo declarations, manifests etc.

Be aware of how imports and exports may be regulated by governments including customs procedures and licensing.

Be aware of the advances being made in the application of computer technology in ports and the developments in so-called 'paperless trading'.

LEGAL ASPECTS OF PORT AGENCY

Thoroughly understand the legal principles governing the relationship between agent and principal. Understand the agent's position when acting for the time charterer.

Understand how a voyage charter appointment can be nominated by the charterer ('charterer's agents') and the importance of avoiding conflict of interest.

Understand the extent of an agent's authority and the consequences of breaching that authority. The agent's liability and fiduciary duty. Be aware of the prudence of obtaining errors and omissions insurance.

Understand the basics of general average and the agent's duties if GA is declared.

Understand the agent's role *vis-à-vis* the owner's P&I Association, especially in connection with cargo claims and arrest of the ship (*arrest in rem*).

ACCOUNTS

Thoroughly understand the importance of accurate recording of the spending of owners' funds leading to the compiling of the final disbursement account.

Understand the need for obtaining funds in advance; the production of proforma disbursement accounts to aid this procedure.

Identifying and separating expenses incurred on behalf of different parties including owners, time charterers, charterers, and merchants and accounting for them accordingly.

Understand the agent's role when instructed to collect freight and the importance of speedy remittance to principals.

Understand the various stages in the recovery of overdue accounts including the ultimate recourse of ship arrest.

Be aware of the value of a shipbroker's P&I Association in such procedures.

Note: No exemption is permitted from this subject.
