

# Safety is a driver of quality and sustainable dry bulk shipping

## SAFETY LIES AT THE HEART OF INTERCARGO'S WORK EXPLAINS ITS SECRETARY GENERAL KOSTAS GKONIS

INTERCARGO is currently publishing its first-ever report on ESG, reviewing key highlights of our Association's activities and initiatives in the ESG sphere. It demonstrates our Association's commitment to quality dry bulk shipping through protecting the environment, safeguarding seafarers' health and safety, and supporting economies and societies. INTERCARGO and its members take high pride in this work.

When reflecting on ESG, we should not forget that safety is a cornerstone and key driver of sustainability for dry bulk shipping.

Safety lies at the heart of all INTERCARGO does: safe operation of ships, safety of crew, and decarbonization with safety.

INTERCARGO actively supports crew safety initiatives and improved bulk carrier management practices to achieve our zero-loss goal and will always be a strong supporter of decarbonization with safety.

INTERCARGO recently welcomed the launch of the Golden Safety Rules by the Together in Safety coalition, of which our Association is an active member.

Safety is paramount, both for ships and for seafarers, and we welcome these helpful Golden Safety Rules which will raise awareness of key safety measures.

Dry bulk shipping has come a long way since the 'dark days' of the 1980s and 1990s when casualty levels and losses of ships and crew were high.

Safety performance in the sector has steadily improved. This is an impressive achievement especially when considering the considerable rise in the number of bulk carriers in the world fleet. Over the past decade the bulk carrier fleet has grown from 10,000 vessels in 2013 to around 13,000 by Jan 2024. It is worth mentioning that the dry bulk sector, the world's largest fleet segment, according to industry statistics now surpasses 1000 million DWT (1 trillion) with today's bulk fleet representing more than 40% of world tonnage.

*Kostas Gkonis, Secretary General  
INTERCARGO.*



As depicted in our upcoming, and annually updated, *Bulk Carrier Casualty Report*, statistics from 2014 to 2023 suggest a clear trend of improvement in terms of the rolling 10-year average of ship losses. The average number of ships lost within the bulk carrier industry continues to reduce, showing positive signs of improvement in safety performance.

However, there is no room for complacency and INTERCARGO has set a course towards zero casualties. With safety firmly in mind we have worked with RightShip to establish the new Dry Bulk Centre of Excellence which will oversee the operation of the DryBMS quality standard for the dry bulk sector.

DryBMS is an independent and straightforward set of best practices and key performance indicators purely focused on vessels carrying dry cargo in bulk at sea and which raise the bar on



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safety, environmental and operational excellence. Safety, environmental and operational excellence are also promoted through confidential company self-assessment with optional third-party verification.

Although an important barometer, the score achieved from the self-assessment is not the most important factor. What matters most is that companies use the self-assessment process to identify areas of reduced performance and to then drive improvement forward.

This is an exciting development for dry bulk shipping companies. By assessing their management systems and carrying out continual improvement to meet the higher stages of the DryBMS Framework, companies can help improve their safety and operational performance — and by doing so collectively we all raise the standards of our industry as a whole.

At this present time, ships are still very much at the mercy of world events and geopolitical conflicts. We continue to keep under review the safety of ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, as well as the Black Sea, and in piracy hotspots, such as the Gulf of Guinea, and to keep members apprised of latest guidance. We strongly condemn attacks on merchant ships and innocent seafarers and actively support the IMO's international efforts to secure safe passage for all commercial ships across the globe.

INTERCARGO's membership continues to increase and currently stands at almost 160 Full Members with about 3,300 bulkers entered with the Association of a total capacity in excess of 325 million dwt, together with some 95 Associate Members. We look forward to informative and productive spring Semi Annual Meetings in Tokyo in May when our Technical and Executive Committees will come together to assess progress and discuss key industry matters. In the meantime, our work at IMO and in industry groups continues at full speed and always with safety in mind.

*Kostas Gkonis, Secretary General  
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