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Safety Bulletin 07 /2026

Airbags: The right pressure



Before: An airbag is filled, using the old type of pressure gauge.

Dear all,

G2 Ocean is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all personnel involved in our operations. The purpose of our Safety Bulletins is to raise awareness of health & safety risks associated with cargo operations.

G2 Ocean works with several hundred stevedore companies worldwide. We believe that by seeking and sharing insights across company and country boundaries, we can prevent future incidents together. Descriptions of incidents will always be fully anonymised.

This edition is about airbags and how innovation in equipment can improve safety.

If you have any feedback, please email us at:

safety@g2ocean.com

Best regards G2 Ocean Team
Pioneering Sustainable Shipping Solutions
www.g2ocean.com

Airbags –for cars and cargo

Innovation is sometimes slow in our industry, but airbags were used for cargo long before the 1990s, when they became a standard safety device in cars. Airbags have been used as dunnage since the 1970s, replacing wood, scrap tires and other materials used to fill gaps in the stow. The bags were lighter, easier to use, and more flexible.

The bags work best when inflated to the *right* pressure, about 6 psi. Our old gauges indicated pressure in psi, which is not a common metric everywhere in the world, and it required all users to know what the ideal pressure is supposed to be.

9 psi is the max pressure, and the bags are regularly tested to this level, but it is not the ideal pressure to prevent cargo movement. Over-inflation will increase the risk of getting punctured bags during the sea voyage.



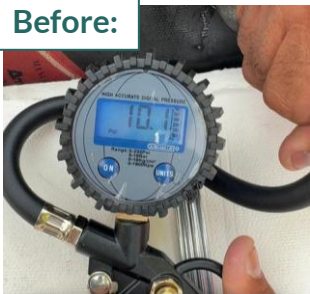
Now: The new pressure gauge is used. On the next page you can see what has changed and why it matters.

Why it matters:

During this voyage, pulp cargo shifted towards port side and a 2m gap opened on starboard, 7-8m deep. On arrival there were many damaged and deflated airbags. In this incident, the main causes were rough weather and not stowing the units tight enough, during loading. Similar cargo shifting incidents can happen if airbags are not pressurized to the right level.



Before:



Now:



The indicator of the new pressure gauge will turn green when the bag is inflated to the right pressure. If you continue filling, the green colour will disappear. Pressure must be released for the green colour to reappear.



Innovation is one of G2 Ocean's safety behaviours. We expect this behaviour from our own employees, and everyone we work with. It means to always look for safer ways of working, and together with our suppliers look for modifications in equipment which can improve safety.

Consequences:



- Actual: There were no injuries during the discharge of the cargo pictured above.
- Potential: Cargo which has shifted during the voyage will always increase the safety risk during unloading. In this incident, the gaps in the stow increased the fall risk for stevedores and crew.

Lesson learned:



- Airbags are important for the safety of the vessel and the persons involved in cargo handling. Crew inspects airbags after use and remove the damaged ones. Pinhole leaks can be identified by spraying soapy water on seams and valves, where leaks are most common.
- An airbag can look fully inflated but still have too low pressure. The pressure can also be too high. If the indicator is green, the pressure is right, about 6 psi.