The information in this brochure is intended to provide more information on feeder hold grain pouring options for grain loading during inclement weather at Port Metro Vancouver.

"We have to conclude that based upon the testing that has been carried out so far that it is generally safe to load ships with wheat, barley, canola, flax or peas at loading rates of up to 2000 tonnes/hour provided that safety precautions are exercised."

Evaluating the Safety of Grain-Loading Through Feeder-Holes

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Inclement Weather Grain Loading at Port Metro Vancouver

SAFE AND EFFICIENT LOADING THROUGH FEEDER HOLES

Feeder hole grain pouring is all about the reliable movement of cargo in a safe and efficient manner to support Canadian growth and prosperity.

BACKGROUND

From a Canadian perspective, feeder hole grain pouring translates to the trustworthy movement of cargo in a safe and efficient manner with a view to supporting the growth of the economy, ensuring international competitiveness, providing sustainable long term employment at all stages of the supply chain.

Avoidable delays in handling any cargo during inclement weather conditions are expensive and impact the port's reputation for reliability. Feeder hole grain pouring has been proven as a practical, safe and effective solution to ensuring that cargo is loaded in a dry, quality controlled, condition.

THE LOADING OF GRAIN THROUGH FEEDER HOLES

Many vessels are specifically constructed to facilitate feeder (or cement) hole grain pouring through designated openings in hatch covers which are large enough to accommodate the load spout of most bulk loading conveyor systems. In addition to providing rain protection, the loading of grain through feeder holes also has the advantage of containing dust.

Research into concerns related to the loading of grain products was requested by Transport Canada and conducted by the British Columbia Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA), on behalf of its member stevedores, grain terminals, grain exporters and other interested parties. Professional expertise in industrial ventilation was retained to study, test and validate the practice. This study concluded that it is entirely safe to load grain through feeder holes provided that basic safety precautions are followed. This is a common best practice worldwide, including in British Columbia.

ENSURING A SAFE OPERATION

The procedures used in feeder hole pouring ensure that hazards are identified and mitigated for the safety of the vessel, its crew, the terminal and longshore workers involved. To avoid the buildup of static between vessel and load spout, the agreed practice to achieve electrical grounding is to use either a non-conductive loading pipe or ensure the edge of the feeder hole is insulated by non-conductive material. Dust levels are monitored and tested on an ongoing basis using a Visual Opacity probe which is inserted into the hold through a vent opening or unused feeder hole. This monitoring process ensures that dust levels remain within safe working parameters. In the unlikely event that dust levels exceed the established guidelines, loading will be ceased until levels return to an acceptable point. Ventilation is achieved and maintained through the opening of other feeder holes or ventilation ports, however, should it be necessary to increase ventilation, a vessel's hatch cover may be cracked open or mechanical ventilation introduced.

PREPARING TO LOAD

Preparation for feeder hole grain pouring is straightforward and safe. Setup can be done in as little as half an hour, depending on the configuration and conditions. At commencement of loading in each hold, cargo flow rate is carefully managed to ensure a slow build up of cargo. A gradual increase to optimum load speed is then achieved over a period of 20-30 minutes.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information including copies of the research and studies conducted to support the development of the feeder hole pouring procedures is readily available. Please contact the British Columbia Maritime Employers Association, Chamber of Shipping of British Columbia or individual terminal operators for further information:

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