

**MISCELLANEOUS OPENINGS IN FREEBOARD AND  
SUPERSTRUCTURE DECKS — SPURLING PIPES**

**Notice to Shipowners, Masters and Mates**

1. The Department of Trade and Industry wishes to draw attention to the following two incidents where the ingress of water through spurling pipes was a contributory cause to these ships becoming casualties. In the first case, referred to below, the ship foundered resulting in a loss of life.

2. A loaded ship on passage from Holland met with heavy weather in the English Channel. The canvas covers to the spurling pipes were tom away and the chain locker and forecastle store became flooded. The ship being already down by the head the additional flooding was sufficient to bring the well deck under water thereby placing the air pipes and subsequently the cargo hatchways in jeopardy. Progressive flooding occurred and eventually the ship was lost.

3. The other ship also outward bound from Holland encountered heavy seas which were sufficient to break the cement which plugged the starboard spurling pipe. Sea water thus gained access to the chain locker and the forward stores space producing trim by the head and bringing the foredeck awash. Fortunately the Master took early action and returned to port where the spurling pipes were recemented.

4. In the first case the mere fitting of canvas around the spurling pipes was insufficient but had the canvas been supported by close fitting steel plates a more efficient means of preventing the ingress of water would have been provided. The second case showed that the quantity of cement used must be adequate not only to plug the spurling pipes but also to prevent lateral movement of the cables within them.

5. Owners and Masters should examine the existing arrangements on their ships to see whether these are in good order and ensure that improvements are made where necessary. When considering the design of new ships, owners may wish to locate and arrange chain lockers in such a manner that where inadvertent flooding does occur it is limited in extent.

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