

## 2. Weight and freight declaration

Readers of TT Talk and other TT publications will be familiar with the concerns expressed about the quality of declaration of cargo, particularly in the maritime part of the supply chain. This was highlighted in two separate incidents - 'Annabella' and 'MSC Napoli' - that were investigated by the UK MAIB. In the second incident it was found that the ship was carrying some 1,250 tonnes more than was declared ('deadload') when leaving the load port and 20% of the deck containers that could be weighed were more than three tonnes different from their declared weights. While not seen as a primary cause of the accident, the report stated that weight misdeclaration is an element that 'erodes or eliminates the safety margins', noting also that only in container shipping is the weight of the cargo unknown.

ICHCA International recently reported that the 'Dutch Government has enacted a new statutory instrument regarding road transport which means that shippers and forwarders, as well as road hauliers, could be fined for overweight containers being on the roadways.' This is consistent with many countries around the world and the fines can be stiff. Weight misdeclaration continues to be an

issue that endangers lives and property throughout the supply chain. While authorities may take action on roads, other modes of transport are generally less regulated. Rail carriers, inland or marine terminals and shipping lines are more likely to be left to their own devices, generally relying on contractual provisions that require the shipper or consignor to declare correctly. While charges or indemnities can - and should - be applied for infringement, collection may not be straightforward.

At the same time, many readers will have seen reports concerning the fire on 'MOL Prosperity' at the beginning of July just outside Hong Kong waters. Initial reports that the cause was related to declared dangerous goods were discounted as the fire started in a container declared to contain inert goods. The final conclusion of the investigators has not yet been published. However, it again raises the spectre that declaration of the nature of the goods being carried - out of sight - in the container was inadequate. Whatever ultimately becomes known about this particular incident, it forms another timely reminder that those involved need to be vigilant to know your shipper and seek to validate that both weight and contents are accurately declared. And, as mentioned through the first article in this issue of TT Talk, awareness and functional training for packaged dangerous goods is now mandated throughout the supply chain. 