What is it? This is an International Maritime Organization (IMO) new schedule for the bulk shipping of Mn ore fines (<15mm); meaning that fines will be shipped as a Group A cargo. Existing schedules include Mn ore - Group C, and Mn ore Concentrate - Group A.

Am I affected by this? If you ship ore fines at less than 15mm size you need to determine if the cargo could liquefy. Liquefaction means that the cargo load, if sufficiently wet, becomes liquid-like in the hold of the vessel, creating instability and leading to the possibility of capsize (below).

When is the new schedule effective? The IMO meets in September 2014 to ratify the draft. The schedule will likely be mandatory shortly thereafter (possibly as early as January 2015).

What should I do? The first step is to determine if your fines can liquefy. A result indicating the cargo has a Flow Moisture Point (i.e. it does liquefy) means that a Transportable Moisture Limit (TML) is calculated. There are three tests for this; the one recommended for Mn ore fines is the Penetration Test (below).

Does my fines cargo liquefy?
- No: ship as the existing Manganese ore Group C. Recommendation to check liquefaction potential every 6-months, or whenever there is a significant change in the sizing of your fines.
- Yes: you then need to determine the TML (above) and ensure that the moisture content is measured and reported to the ship’s Master along with the cargo’s TML.

Where can I get my fines tested? Several test houses exist, but Alfred H. Knight is familiar with metallic ore fines, with test facilities in Hong Kong, Australia, South Africa, UK and Mozambique: see (http://www.ahkgroup.com/contact-us). A min 30kg sample is needed, typical 72 hours turnaround time, cost ca. USD 1,600 per sample.

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