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How can ships avoid detention for drug smuggling?



Phil Butler

Many ship operators will be aware of the current detention by the Hellenic Coast Guard of the bulk carrier Skyros following arrival from Brazil with a cargo of soyabeans. The ship and all 23 crew members remain detained at the orders of the Corinth Port Authority whilst the incident is investigated by the Greek Directorate of Drug Prosecution and Smuggling.

The Directorate first searched the ship without success but then divers were assigned to search below the waterline and a watertight bag was found containing 38 bags of cocaine – 47 kg in all with a potential street value in Europe of \$4-5m. The bag had been hidden behind the grate leading to a suction drain.

The ship manager has stated that they were an unknowing participant in this incident which is the last in a long line of similar cases where criminals go to great lengths to smuggle drugs into - especially - Europe and the US. This always results in substantial costs and delays whilst investigation takes place and potentially large fines.

Qwest Forensics is uniquely placed to offer advice to shipowners on how to prevent such contraband being smuggled on board- or in this case attached to the ship - in the first place.

Our team are all former senior UK military or law enforcement officers, many of whom have worked undercover and some of whom have actually posed as criminals working with the drug cartels smuggling such contraband on board vessels into the USA and Europe.

This unique experience has allowed us to develop a bespoke service utilising dedicated experienced advisors, standard operating procedures, and tailored advice which all owners can adopt to prevent drugs being smuggled onto the ship in high risk countries or ports.

Qwest Forensics

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