



## CHLORIDES ON STEEL - SEA SALT OR ROAD SALT?

As winter approaches in the northern hemisphere we will once again be seeing salt and grit sprayed on the roads to keep them free of ice and prevent vehicles from sliding off the road and into each other. After driving on such salty roads all drivers will have seen the resulting dull white or grey film over their vehicles and no doubt think of the corrosive effect this has on the bodywork and chassis.



But one of the surveyors who is frequently appointed by us has pointed out another consequence of the salting of roads. Not only are the vehicles being coated in a salty spray, but this spray also covers any unprotected cargo carried on the backs of trucks. The accompanying photos show trucks on the highway with uncovered cold-rolled steel coils, being driven through salty spray. Whether en-route to the receivers or being delivered to the berth for shipment these salty deposits will start the corrosion process and probably result in a damage claim. A standard silver nitrate test as used by surveyors will show the presence of chlorides and the inference will probably be made that the cargo has been damaged as a consequence of wetting by seawater. No matter how good the ship's hatch covers are proved to be, defending the claim against the ship may be difficult.

This shows the importance of a pre-load survey when loading such cargoes and the appointment of a surveyor who is aware of the complete transport chain and the environment to which the cargo has been subjected, and the degree of protection that may have been offered. It may be a sensible precaution to test for chlorides before loading where the cargo has been transported by road to the ship. This may determine that the cargo was exposed to chlorides before loading. Similarly, where the onward journey will be by road, to establish that the cargo was chloride-free before discharge.

If any readers have experience of this problem they are invited to contact the Loss Prevention Department at British Marine to share their knowledge.

We are grateful to Bull Sworn Surveyors in Barcelona for this contribution.