

# MEMBER ALERT

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## **DOUBLER PLATES**

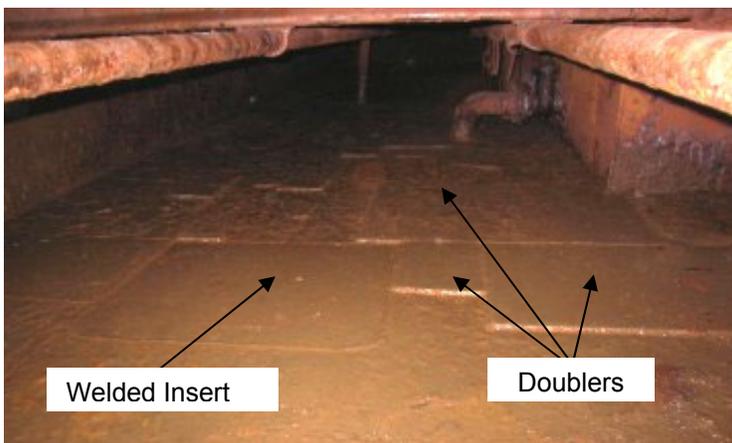
Doubler plates or 'doubblers', as they are most commonly called, have been a problem area in steel ship repair for many years. Doubler plates are used in steel repair to cover up cracked or holed sections of steel plate. The doubler is laid over and fillet welded to the defective plate. The use of doublers can lead to the deteriorated plates they cover to crack, allowing the doublers to leak, loosen, or become detached, degrading the seaworthiness of the vessel. In effect, the risk of loss is present as long as the doubler plates remain. This circular is a reminder to Members that the Club does not consider the use of doublers as a permanent repair.

### **Doublers as temporary repair**

Owners like to apply a doubler to a wasted, holed, or otherwise degraded or deteriorated plate because it is much less time consuming and costly than to crop and renew the subject area by a welded insert. The problem with a doubler is, that although it covers a bad plate with a better plate, it adds no strength or durability to the area in which it is applied; only a hard spot, and the certainty that some day the fillet welds holding it on will crack, and the doubler will fall off. Using doubler plates is never considered a permanent repair.

### **Class and Club approaches to the use of doublers**

Classification societies consider doublers as a temporary, not permanent, repair. As a result, the American Club considers the use of doubler plates as a deficiency. Classification societies do allow a vessel to sail with doubler plates on areas, which do not contribute to the overall structural strength of the vessel, although they impose a requirement that class must continue to re-inspect them each year.



**Doubler plates**

The American Club, in like manner, will not restrict the vessel's operation either. However, in the interests of loss control, the Club will impose a specific defect warranty on any outstanding deficiencies including the use of doublers.

Whether the classification society calls it a condition or a

memorandum, the fact remains that class has imposed a requirement that doublers must be inspected annually. The Club will take steps to control loss by minimizing risks, which is why the Club requires a defect warranty until deficiencies are rectified.

**Conclusion**

To rectify an outstanding deficiency involving doublers, the Club requires all doublers to be removed and the deteriorated plate to be cropped to sound steel and inserted with a new plate of equal thickness and quality as the original. As long as the doublers remain in place, the Club will regard them as outstanding deficiencies and defect warranties will apply.

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