

This event caused an eruption of indignation that was entirely justified. The more than 30,000 tonnes of imported cement was to have been delivered to Magadan Oblast. Construction industry enterprises were placed in a very difficult situation, since any interruption in the supply of raw materials threatened an industry shutdown. What was the cause of the unusual event?

The unloading of Korean cement in Magadan, and also in other far eastern ports, has been creating an intolerable situation for some time. Contrary to generally accepted standards of international trade, almost half the deliveries of this raw material from the People's Republic of Korea arrive in an unpackaged state. At the loading ports the paper bags containing the cement are thrown directly into the holds of the vessels from the transport vehicles. Owing to the extreme flimsiness of the packaging, which consists of three or four leaves of kraft-paper sewn together instead of the required seven, knee-deep piles of cement form.

Unloading this type of load is a hellish process. The dust content in the holds exceeds maximum permissible levels by a factor of between 70 and 90. The longshoremen have no means of reliable personal protection. Gas masks and respirators are useless in such situations. In Magadan some people have already been hospitalized with chemical burns.

For many years the longshoremen have been bombarding higher authorities with letters and reports. The necessity of packaging the cement has been demonstrated at various levels of Magadanglavsnaab (Magadan Central Agency for Material and Technical Supplies) and other Oblast organizations. In 1985 some executive agencies