

Harsh Winter has Precious Salt Cargo Discharging Quickly Through Wilmington

The U.S. Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions saw a great deal of snow, sleet and ice this past winter. This created a greater demand for road salt, used to maintain safe driving conditions on major thoroughfares. A new customer at the Port of Wilmington helped to meet that demand.

When looking for an alternative and responsive facility to import and quickly discharge nearly 30,000 tons of rock salt, Chemical Equipment Labs, Inc., of Havertown, Pennsylvania, came to the Port of Wilmington. The Port's location and

facilities, an experienced stevedoring crew, and a nearby bulk handling provider, capable of organizing the truck away from dockside for quick delivery, made for a winning business proposition.

The Port of Wilmington is the southernmost deepwater port on the Delaware River. Among its specialties is the handling of break-bulk and dry bulk products like steel, forest products, ores, minerals and others. With a 38-foot MLW (mean low water) depth in the Christina River channel and its berths, the Port can safely accommodate deep-draught

vessels. Using one or both of its 50-ton capacity gantry cranes equipped with 8- or 16-yard grab buckets emptying into 17- or 26-yard hoppers, the Port is capable of cycling a truck-a-minute of bulk cargo.

Bulk cargo operations at the Port are handled by Delaware River Stevedores, and bulk material handlers Port Contractors, Inc., orchestrating a timely loadout.

"Chemical Equipment Labs needed quick turn around in order to respond to its customers' needs.



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The discharge of nearly 30,000 tons of rock salt fulfilled a much needed demand this winter.

"We like the facilities at the Port of Wilmington," said Ed Morgan, owner and President, Chemical Equipment Labs. "Through this time-sensitive experience, we have developed a good relationship with the Port, Delaware River Stevedores, and Port Contractors," he added. Chemical Equipment Labs, in business for more than 30 years, imports thousands of tons of bulk salt each year from Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico and Chile for distribution to non-municipal customers

such as malls, hospitals and utility companies in Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland. It imports rock salt as a deicer and solar salt as an ingredient in water treatment, primarily for the food industry. The company plans to continue bringing in salt through the Port of Wilmington and will open a bagging plant for the salt. The company will most likely begin using its nearby Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania site for warehousing.

"We are looking forward to working with Chemical Equipment Labs as it expands its operations to Delaware," Ehrlich said.

To find out more about importing or exporting bulk cargoes through the Port of Wilmington, contact Tom Keefer, DSPC Deputy Executive Director, at (302) 472-7820.

We're very customer-focused and could offer the attention it needed at a critical time this past winter," said Steve Ehrlich, Vice President of Port Contractors, located adjacent to the port. "Port Contractors handles the product from ship to load-out – staging and scaling the trucks, tracking purchase orders and inventory, and getting the delivery to the customer," said Ehrlich.

An incoming snowstorm coincident with ship's arrival presented a challenge on this particular occasion because much of the region's road salt stocks had been depleted. The 30,000-ton salt cargo arrived on January 27 aboard the m/v Stam, and it needed to be trucked out as soon as it arrived. "Staging was really key to effectively managing the outgoing truckloads and avoiding too much of a bottleneck dockside," Ehrlich explained.

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