

Off-spec of IMO 2020-compliant very low sulphur fuel oil or ultra-low sulphur fuel oil

(Publication by alert published by the Fuel Oil Bunker Analysis Service, an advisory unit of Lloyd's Register)



BUNKERS with off-specification sediment content, which could compromise ship engines' integrity or performance, have resurfaced in the Antwerp-Rotterdam Amsterdam region.

Tests on samples drawn from very low sulphur fuel oil or ultra-low sulphur fuel oil supplied out of Rotterdam last week reflected sediment levels above a commonly observed bunkering standard, according to an alert published by the Fuel Oil Bunker Analysis Service, an advisory unit of Lloyd's Register.

These samples of fuel oil with less than 80 cSt viscosity were found to hold 0.16% m/m (mass by mass) to 0.43% m/m in total sediment content.

The ISO8217 standard for bunkering operations sets the limit on sediment content at 0.1% m/m.

Fuels with high levels of sediments that can lead to excessive sludge clogging up ship engines, were detected at the start of this year in the bunker streams of the ARA region and Singapore.

Singapore and Rotterdam rank as top bunkering hubs by marine fuel sales in Asia and Europe respectively.

FOBAS has also warned last week of low flash point fuels being found among marine gas oil products supplied out of Singapore.

Low flash point fuels are widely considered as contributing to the higher risk of fire on board vessels.

Concerns about such off-spec bunkers have heightened following the implementation of the IMO 2020 regulations imposing a 0.5% limit on sulphur content in marine fuels.

Many bunker products in the market — whether marine gasoil, VLSFO or ULSFO — complying with the IMO 2020 sulphur limit are blends with low-sulphur components that can contribute to fuel instability, experts have warned.

Advice: Analyse fuel before use, specifically on aforementioned items.

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