



News

Bunkering Procedures

Members will be aware that the consequences of a pollution incident during bunkering are becoming increasingly unpredictable. Any spill, no matter how small, may result in penalties and costs far outweighing the apparent gravity of the event, reinforcing the need for every shipowner to eliminate risks.

This Bulletin has been written in order to reiterate procedures which should be observed on board while a vessel is bunkering with a view to eradicating such risks. As a practical measure, the recommendations are summarized in the form of a check list either for direct use by the ship or to assist Members in reviewing or formulating their own versions. Utilizing a check list and following a predetermined routine can minimize the likelihood of important safeguards being overlooked.

Members requiring a more comprehensive account of prudent procedures relating to bunker and oil cargo operations are referred to the IMO publication on this subject entitled "Manual on Oil Pollution Section 1-Prevention" (ISBN 92-801-1152-3).

A senior engineer should always be appointed to co-ordinate and take charge of the bunkering plan, and it is intended that the check list be used by this officer. He should first ensure all crew members involved in the exercise are fully conversant with the specification and quantity of fuel to be lifted, the ship's fuelling and tank sounding arrangements, the alarm system and the loading sequence. It is of primary importance that all personnel on board are made aware of the intention to bunker so that the vessel's emergency response plan can be activated without delay should a spill occur in the event of an accident. In addition, it should not be forgotten that the bunkering facility itself may be the source of a spill, and the contingency arrangements of the barge or terminal should be checked and discussed beforehand.

Clear and detailed drawings of the vessel's bunkering system should be available for use by members of the ship's bunkering team during the operations. As well as aiding the routine checking of pipeline configurations, access to such diagrams may prove indispensable in an emergency.

When agreeing signaling procedures with the terminal or barge, Members are advised to consider using an audible alarm to supplement an emergency stop, recognizable by all parties. This additional defence may secure a swifter response than relying entirely on VHF contact or other methods of signaling.

To reduce the chance of misunderstandings still further, the key elements of the bunker plan may be summarized in writing and signed by both the responsible bunkering officer and the supplier as confirmation of mutual agreement.

During the course of bunkering, representative samples should be taken and retained. The subject of fuel specification and bunker sampling is expansive and extends beyond the general provisions of this Bulletin, therefore it is intended to circulate detailed advice regarding sampling procedures and bunker quality in the near future.

The duty officer should keep in close contact with the bunker team throughout. Moorings must be tended to ensure that the movement of the vessel is restricted to a minimum and that the ship, as far as practicable, is kept upright and on an even keel.

The Club's analysis of major claims established that the collective value of over-filling incidents in recent years has exceeded \$3 million, and rapidly escalating penalties are progressively magnifying the risks. If these basic principles of bunkering are followed, exposure to associated losses can almost certainly be reduced.

Yours faithfully
Assurance Foreningen Ltd

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BUNKERING CHECK LIST

Initial Preparation:	
Ensure all personnel are aware of intention to bunker and emergency response procedures	
Discuss bunkering plan and tank sequence with officers involved	
Close and secure all associated overboard discharge valves	
Close and blank off all unnecessary manifold valves/connections	
Plug all deck scuppers and make oil/watertight	
Empty out and plug save-alls	
Place oil absorbent materials in key locations	
Provide means of draining off any accumulations of water on deck	
Establish common communication link between bunkering station, duty officer and engine room	
Check all bunker tank air pipes are open and unblocked	
Ensure all sounding pipe caps are tight, except when sounding tank	
Reconfirm space remaining in all bunker tanks to be filled	
Check all bunker tank high level alarms are functioning	
Ensure all fire precautions are observed	

Prior to Bunkering:	
Check hose is of sufficient length	
Inspect hose and couplings for damage	
Check weight of hose does not exceed SWL of vessel's lifting gear	
Place drip trays under hose couplings and flanges	
Check delivery note quantity and specification are correct	
Discuss bunkering plan with supplier	
Discuss vessel's emergency response procedures with supplier	
Discuss supplier's own emergency response procedures	
Establish communication link between vessel and supplier	
Agree signalling system with supplier Commence Pumping	
	Reduce Pumping Rate
	Cease Pumping
	Emergency Stop
Agree with supplier the quantity of oil to be pumped aboard	
Agree unit of measurement (metric tonnes, cubic metres, barrels etc)	
Agree maximum pumping rate and pressure	
Carry out spot analysis with vessel's fuel test kit (if carried)	
Conduct compatibility test, if necessary	
Sight, agree and record shore/barge meter readings	
Appoint seaman to tend mooring lines during bunkering	
Rig fire wires fore and aft (if applicable)	
Ensure designated overflow tank is prepared	
Prepare filling line and open all relevant valves	



During Bunkering:	
Commence bunkering at minimum pumping rate	
Monitor supply line pressure	
Examine hose connections for leakage	
Reduce pumping rate and/or open next tank before topping up	
Close valves as each tank is completed	
Witness, date, jointly countersign and retain sealed bunker samples	
Ensure sufficient ullage in final tank for hose draining/line blowing	
Notify supplier when final tank is reached	
Give suppliers timely warning to reduce pumping rate	
Give suppliers timely warning to stop pumping	
Drain hoses on completion of bunkering and close all filling valves	

On completion of Bunkering:	
Ensure all hoses are fully drained	
Close and blank off manifold connection	
Blank off disconnected hose couplings	
Reconfirm all bunker line and tank filling valves are secured	
Reconfirm all bunker tank soundings	
Sight, agree and record shore/barge meter readings	
Verify all bunker receipt details are correct	
Complete entry in Oil Record Book	