



Maritec Tanker Management Pvt Ltd

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GENERAL CIRCULAR

08/2020

Date: 31st May 2020

To: Fleet

Subject: Bunkering – Safe Practices

Dear Masters/Chief Engineers,

Bunkering operations are routine and yet critical, high risk operations which require to be carefully planned and performed by the crew in accordance with established shipboard procedures. Although the vast majority of bunker transfers are carried out without incident, very occasionally, things can and do go wrong. A loss of containment due to a tank overflow, or leakage from pipeline or transfer hose failure, may result in oil spilling overboard and polluting the marine environment.

Recent experience suggests that in only a minority of cases do bunker spills occur due to failure of the hoses or pipelines, whereas the majority of spills tend to be as a result of a tank overflowing. These can often be attributed to human error. The reasons for this are varied, but a number of recurring factors are evident:

- Complacency
- High work-load and simultaneous shipboard operations
- Fatigue
- Unfamiliarity
- Poor communication on-board and between ship and barge.

Few of these factors do get amplified when the bunkering operations take place during the night time. It has been decided by the Management as a Policy for all the Fleet vessels, **to have bunkering operation only during the daytime.**

Following operational procedures should be observed for Bunkering:

Procedures in place:

- Allow adequate safety margins when stemming bunkers – stem only to 90% of tank capacity.
- Appropriate maintenance and testing of systems and pipelines, including calibration of remote tank gauges.
- Provision of suitable instructions for operation and for emergency response, including bunker check lists and a bunker plan.
- Regular bunker/oil spill drills to encourage familiarization with bunker systems and procedures.



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- **Pre-arrival preparations should include:**

- Planning for key personnel availability, including suitable rest periods.
- Plan for tank capacities and filling sequence.
- Ensure pipelines are in good order, and empty overflow containment (including save-alls). Test high level and overflow alarms.
- Ensure SOPEP locker contents are readily available.
- Diligent completion of the bunker check list at appropriate times – not in advance.
- Carry out a final oil spill drill and appraise all crew of the impending operation and of their expected duties.

- **At the bunker port – prior to start:**

- Verify correct alignment of the system valves and isolation/blanking of unused components. Check and double-check this point – assume nothing.
- Prominently display the bunker board with fully completed documentation.
- Deploy SOPEP equipment, including fitting plugs to save-all drains as well as to scuppers.
- Control drainage in the event of rainfall.
- Check the supplying facilities (barge, terminal) tank measurements, confirm quantities and grades to be transferred, and in which order, and check the condition of the supplier’s hose and manifold.
- Establish communication, especially emergency signals, and agree pumping rates for the various stages of the operation.

- **During bunkering:**

- Start slowly and build up to full flow rates once appropriate distribution of the fuel (checking none is being delivered where it is not wanted) is established. Confirm pumping rates are at or below the maximum specified.
- Closely monitor tank filling rates and confirm by soundings as appropriate. Do not place over-reliance on remote gauges.
- Maintain regular communication with the supplier.
- Avoid distractions.
- If in doubt, suspend the operation. It’s better to have a delay than a spill.
- Slow down the flow rate for topping off tanks.

- **On completion:**

- Drain the bunker hose well.
- Close the manifold valve. Disconnect and install all relevant blank flanges before removing the bunker hose from the vicinity of the manifold.
- Realign the fuel system for normal operation.



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Kindly discuss the same during the next Safety / Management meeting on board and ensure compliance.

The above circular will be incorporated into the company's SMS at next revision.

Thank You,

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