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FOBAS Alert: Contaminated fuels from Singapore

Applicability: All ship owners and operators

FOBAS is currently investigating a number of samples bunkered in Singapore, which were ordered as ISO-F-RMG380 grade and met specification for table 2 of ISO 8217. However, during the use of these fuels, vessels have reported various problems such as seizing and damage of fuel pumps and excessive sludging and filter blocking.

Many of the suspect fuel samples are still undergoing extended FTIR/GCMS analysis. However, initial findings show that there are few similarities in the results with the recent cases of problematic cases from US Gulf and Panama. GCMS analysis on suspect fuels revealed presence of fatty acids (carboxylic acids), phenols and nitrogen containing compounds.

The presence of these contaminants in a fuel are a cause for concern and as mentioned in both MARPOL Annex VI regulation 18.3 and ISO 8217, Clause 5, no material should be present in the fuel at a concentration that is harmful to personnel, jeopardizes the safety of the ship, or adversely affects the performance of the machinery.

In view of the above, if your ships are planning to bunker in that region, we recommend that suppliers are advised of your concerns regarding the quality of the fuel in the area. Suppliers should also be reminded about the expectation as per ISO 8217: 2010/2012/2017 (Annex B - Deleterious material), to have in place an adequate quality assurance and management of change procedure from the refinery, fuel terminal or any other supply facility, including supply barges and truck deliveries to ensure that the resultant fuel is compliant with the requirements of clause 5 of the standard.

Furthermore, attention should be given to the collection of bunker samples. It should be ensured that all parties have witnessed the sampling process and have signed witness forms accordingly, and that the supporting documentation includes records of all the samples considered representative of the fuel as loaded.

If you require any further information about this Bulletin, please contact us at fobas@lr.org or speak to one of our consultants on +44 (0)330 414 1000 (Southampton UK), +44 (0)1642 440991 Redcar (UK), +65 3163 0888 (Singapore), +30 210 4580 874 (Greece)