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FOBAS Alert: High Aluminium + Silicon (catfines) levels in fuels from Mina al Ahmadi, Kuwait

Applicability: All ship owners, operators and charterers

Recently FOBAS tested a number of samples from Mina al Ahmadi, Kuwait that exceeded the 60 mg/kg limit for Aluminium + Silicon as stipulated in the ISO 8217:2017 specification. The fuels tested had values of these catfines ranging between 85 to 110 mg/kg.

Al+Si content at these concentrations may not readily reduce to acceptable levels (< 15 mg/kg at the engine inlet) by means of normal onboard treatment. Carry over of abrasive Al+Si material may lead to damage to fuel pumps/injectors and cylinder components.

If your ships are planning to bunker in this port then we suggest that the supplier is asked to provide a certificate of quality of the particular stem to ensure that the Aluminium + Silicon concentration is known at the time of bunkering and within the limits of stipulated grade. Particular attention should be given to the collection of a fully representative drip samples ensuring all supporting documentation and samples drawn are witnessed and signed for by all parties present.

Reduction of this abrasive material to satisfactorily low levels will largely depend on the capability, effectiveness and management of the on-board fuel treatment plant. Careful monitoring and operation of fuel treatment plant is needed to reduce the risk of carryover of these abrasive elements to engine rail which can cause increase in wear of fuel pumps/injectors and cylinder components. This may include operating two separators inline under optimum conditions of flow and temperature.

Furthermore, it is recommended that during on-board treatment, system samples should be drawn and analysed in order to verify system performance is as required

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).