

**MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 94 OF 2006**

**(Navigational & Seamanship Safety Practices)**

**Fuel Oil Transfer or Filling Operation on Locally Licensed Vessels**

During recent on board inspections of locally licensed oil barges, malpractice was observed in a diesel oil transfer operation between two oil barges leading to potential fire and pollution hazard as well as emission of large quantity of oil fumes to the atmosphere. In the said operation, instead of using the vessel's proper filling pipe system, the transfer was carried out by inserting two oil hoses of about 100 mm in diameter from the discharging oil barge directly into two cargo tanks of the receiving oil barge through opened manholes on deck. In addition, the oil hoses were only secured to the structure of the receiving barge by thin ropes. The oil discharge rate was fast which caused large quantity of oil fumes to disperse out from the opened manholes of the cargo tanks.

2. It is apparent that the above practice using temporary rigged oil hoses through opened cargo hold manholes was intended to circumvent the lower transfer rate via the vessel's proper filling pipe system. However, it should be noted that the high transfer rate, the opened manholes, together with inadequate hose securing arrangement, would greatly increase the risk of oil spillage. Also the uncontrolled emission of oil fumes through opened manholes would significantly increase the fire hazard during the fuel transfer operation.

3. Shipowners, Agents, Coxswains, Engineers and persons-in-charge of locally licensed vessels are reminded that it is a very serious offence for discharging oil into the waters of Hong Kong. Under section 46 of Shipping and Port Control Ordinance, Cap 313, any person found liable will be subject to a maximum penalty of \$ 200,000. To minimize fire and pollution hazards, all fuel oil transfer or filling operations should be conducted with necessary precaution taken and the guidance given in the "Safe Practices for Fuel Oil Transfer or Filling Operation on Locally Licensed Vessels" annex to this Notice should be observed.

4. For enquires, please contact the Local Vessels Safety Section, 23/F Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong, telephone number 2852 4431 or facsimile number 2542 4679.

W.K. LEE  
Director of Marine (Ag.)

Marine Department  
Government of the HKSAR  
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## **Safe Practices for Fuel Oil Transfer or Filling Operation on Locally Licensed Vessels**

Shipowners, Agents, Coxswains, Engineers and Persons-in-Charge of locally licensed vessels are urged, for the considerations of safety and environmental protection, to ensure observance of the following safe practices when carrying out fuel oil transfer or filling operation:

Before commencing and during transfer of fuel oil, the person-in-charge of the operation should ensure that:

### **1. Preparation before fuel oil transfer**

- (a) The receiving vessel has sufficient tank capacity to receive the anticipated quantity;
- (b) The air vents for the receiving tanks are in good condition and free from blockage;
- (c) The type and size of filling pipe or hose connections are compatible;
- (d) Filling lines or hoses are of suitable type, strength and material, have sufficient length and are adequately supported;
- (e) The filling pipe system, including the appropriate tank valves, are correctly set;
- (f) Filling pipe connections which are not to be used are effectively blanked off;
- (g) Filling hoses are properly connected to the receiving vessel's filling pipe connections, with appropriate gaskets to ensure a good seal;
- (h) Scuppers are firmly closed;
- (i) All tank manhole openings are closed;
- (j) The vessel is securely moored alongside, or in the case of transfer between two vessels, that they are securely tied against each other to avoid any undue movement;
- (k) Equipment and materials for handling oil spill (such as sawdust) are prepared in position for immediate use, or in the case that the vessel is provided with a Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan, the requirements specified therein are followed;
- (l) Fire hoses and extinguishers are in position for immediate use;
- (m) Proper signal is displayed ("B" flag at day time and all round red light at night);
- (n) There is no potential source of ignition, such as personnel smoking, hot spots or other operation that might generate sparks on deck and in the hazardous areas;
- (o) All personnel involving in the operation full understood their respective duties and the procedures; and
- (p) Good communication is established among all personnel involving in the operation.

## **2. Precaution during fuel oil transfer**

- (a) The initial flow rate is reduced to allow checking of any abnormality and leakage;
- (b) A constant visual watch is maintained throughout the whole transfer operation;
- (c) The pressure in the filling pipe system does not exceed the designed limit;
- (d) The receiving tank is regularly monitored for remaining capacity to prevent overflowing;
- (e) Change over of tank is effected before a receiving tank is filled to its maximum capacity;
- (f) The supply oil barge or oil terminal is informed to reduce the filling rate for changing over of receiving tank; and
- (g) The transfer is stopped immediately in case of any abnormalities.

## **3. Precaution at the completion of fuel oil transfer**

- (a) Confirmation with the supply oil barge or oil terminal that the transfer is completed;
- (b) The filling lines or hoses are properly drained before disconnecting; and
- (c) All valves in the filling pipe system are closed and open pipe connections are blanked off.

In case any oil spill or leakage is detected during the transfer operation, the follow action should be taken without delay:

## **4. Contingency response in case of oil spill or leakage**

- (a) Inform the supply oil barge or oil terminal to stop the transfer immediately;
- (b) Contain the oil leakage from spilling to the sea by the stand-by equipment or materials;
- (c) Inform Marine Department Vessel Traffic Centre by VHF Channel 14 or at telephone number 2233 7801; and
- (d) Carry out appropriate actions as mentioned in the Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (if applicable).

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