

FOBAS Alert



14th May 2020

Low Flash Point Distillate Marine Fuel Oil in Antwerp.

In the last week, FOBAS has tested several samples from Antwerp, which were ordered as ISO-F-DMA grades, having tested flash points below the 60°C SOLAS minimum limit for marine fuel oils.

Tested results ranged from 58 to 59 °C. Due to the results below the SOLAS limit, there can be potential safety concerns. It should be noted that SOLAS refers to minimum of 60 °C flash point for marine fuels and therefore no test tolerance range applies to the limit of 60 Deg C which is considered as absolute.

As a first step for any ship having bunkered fuel with a low flash point, it is recommended to contact the ship's classification society, flag State and the insurance underwriters immediately for further advice.

Secondly further samples from the top of relevant storage tanks should be taken to confirm the flash point of the fuel in tanks as it can be the case that low flash points have been due to some of the low flash components in the fuel which are prone to evaporate giving rise to the flash point of fuel.

Additionally, best practice safety guidelines should be followed to reduce the potential risk due to low flash point fuel;

- Maintain fuel temperatures in storage tanks at minimum possible.
- Check fuel tank vent gauze condition.
- Keep relevant tanks well ventilated to minimise accumulation of flammable gases.
- Avoid hot work and smoking or any other heat source in the vicinity of fuel storage tanks and vents.
- Observe any other relevant safety procedures contained in international safety code.

If your ships are planning to bunker at this port, we recommend that suppliers are advised of your concerns regarding the flash point of the fuel and that they provide you with additional reassurance that they will meet the SOLAS requirements for marine fuel oils.

Additional 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), +30 211 990 7732 (Greece). For anything urgent, please contact us via our out of office number, +44 (0)1642 425660.

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