

Authorities ready to play hard

As the clock ticks down, port state control organisations round the world are making sure they are ready for the new sulphur limit on bunkers

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Shipowners who are hoping for a soft approach in the early days of IMO 2020 will be disappointed.

Port state control (PSC) authorities round the world are preparing to enforce the 0.5% global sulphur cap from 1 January next year. The world's largest PSC regions — the Tokyo and Paris MOUs — have already warned owners that failure to comply with the regulation could lead to vessel detention.

In the meantime, the main PSC authorities have been investing in training, technology and hardware to meet the challenge.

Some countries have already lined up fines for IMO 2020 non-compliance. But the most costly development for owners could be whether they are forced to debunker non-compliant fuel.

DELAYS AND COSTS

Nicholas Woo, a shipping partner at Birketts, says fines could be cheaper than prolonged detention. "If PSC authorities act in the spirit of the regulation and make vessels debunker non-compliant fuel, then that will lead to a lot of delays and costs."

IMO guidelines provide a compliance checklist for inspectors.

The bunker delivery note and onboard samples will be the first stage of evidence for shipowners when they will be asked to prove they are using compliant fuels.

After that, fuel testing is likely only if there are firm grounds to suspect the vessel may be out of compliance.

Tokyo MOU secretary Hideo Kubota tells TradeWinds: "Fuel testing needs to be carried out only when there is clear ground for believing fuel oil used by a vessel [is] not meeting 2020 sulphur cap requirements."

He is aiming at a "consistent and harmonised" implementation of the regulation across the region and describes the IMO's PSC guidelines as "sufficient".

International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) technical director Sunil Krishnakumar says owners have nothing to fear if they follow the IMO's implementation template and have a detailed compliance plan.

"Document everything," he advises. "As long as you can demonstrate to PSC that you have a compliance plan in place, and have done your best to stick to it, then you will have nothing to be concerned about."

The IMO has developed a standardised fuel oil non-availability report (FONAR), which will allow shipowners to demonstrate their attempts to buy compliant fuel if they have not been able to source it. But it also allows an opportunity for owners to turn down compliant fuel if they believe it could be dangerous.

However, ICS deputy secretary general Simon Bennett has warned that FONARs should not be regarded as a "free pass" to get out of the new regulation.

Inspectors monitoring sulphur emissions have been well briefed on the changes.

The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), which calculates the annual ship inspection and sampling commitment for European Union countries, has been training about 40 inspectors per year from member states since implementation of the original sulphur directive in 2015. Canada has also

DRONE TESTS:

Leendert Bal of the European Maritime Safety Agency

Photo: EMSA



been sending its personnel over to join the sessions.

Georgios Christofi, head of environment and capacity building at the EMSA, says his department has created an e-learning model for the directive to accompany the two-and-a-half-day seminars.

In addition, Portugal-based EMSA arranges for inspectors to go onboard ships in the port of Lisbon for a practical review with the authority, often selecting scrubber-fitted or LNG-fuelled vessels to get different perspectives.

Christofi, who has taken part himself, says: "I think it is one of our best trainings because it is really hands on. We do our best to train inspectors and to provide them with guidance to safeguard uniform implementation of the enforcement regime."

The EMSA aims to keep a level playing field in the EU and through the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions, he says.

The agency also has a new tool up its sleeve. "We have developed a web service where measurements from drones could be used to create an alert for a potentially non-compliant fuel," Christofi tells TradeWinds.



Photo: Adam Corbett

Sunil Krishnakumar:
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Over the past few years, EMSA has been developing remotely piloted aircraft system (RPAS) services to monitor ship emissions or pollution, as well as for search and rescue.

Member states can apply for these services and the data can be sent direct to the EMSA from the drone or via the authority deploying it.

LIMITED BUDGET

Leendert Bal, EMSA's head of operations, says there has been interest from member states but the budget is limited.

This year, he says, there will be three drone deployments for emissions detection in Denmark, France and Greece. The first of these will kick off in Denmark next month.

Christofi says that for the 2020 sulphur cap, a ship should not be penalised purely from drone measurements.

"There will not be more detentions or inspections from the use of RPAS, but a more rationalised way of selecting ships because these [measurements] could potentially identify a non-compliant ship," he says.



ball on IMO 2020



REGIME CHANGE: Bunker barge crew refuel a vessel (left). Above, an IMO port state control emissions and efficiency practice on a containership in Malaysia — one of many exercises round the world being conducted so that the industry is ready for the new sulphur regime

Photos: IMO

SINGAPORE AND HONG KONG PROMISE STRICT STANCE ON SULPHUR CAP

Jonathan Boonzaier

Singapore and Hong Kong are well known for taking an aggressive stand against anyone who breaks the rules.

Singapore's tourist shops have even gone so far as to print T-shirts describing it as a "fine city", while listing all the penalties facing miscreants who dare to bring the notoriously noxious durian fruit onto public transport or forget to flush a public toilet.

So when Singapore and Hong Kong say they will vigorously enforce the IMO's sulphur cap regulation come 1 January, the shipping industry had better take note.

TAKING IT SERIOUSLY

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and the Hong Kong Marine Department (Mardep), the government entities charged with enforcing IMO policies, make it clear in written responses to enquiries from TradeWinds that they will take IMO 2020 very seriously.

Miscreants will face tough penalties.

In Hong Kong, use of non-compliant fuel oil will be liable to a maximum penalty of HKD 100,000 (\$12,750).

Singapore's penalty will be SGD 10,000 (\$7,400), the same figure it sets for violation of any other Marpol Annex VI rule. The MPA warns that the owners and the master of the ship could also be imprisoned for up to two years for non-compliance with these regulations.

Both authorities indicate that enforcement of the IMO 2020 rules will be carried out as part of regular flag state and port state control inspection regimes.

"Ships that fail to use an approved abatement technology, alternative fuel or compliant fuel will be considered as non-compliant with the IMO 2020 regulations," the MPA warns.

"In addition, the MPA will also prohibit the discharge of wash water from open-loop scrubbers by ships in the Port of Singapore, to maintain Singapore's marine water-quality standard."

Information supplied by Mardep indicates that the same will apply for all ships calling in Hong Kong.

The MPA and Mardep will conduct fuel-compliance checks through random sampling of the bunkers onboard vessels to make sure the fuel is IMO-compliant. Neither organisation mentioned any plans to test the sulphur content of engine emissions.

Mardep assures TradeWinds it has sufficient capacity and manpower to carry out all required IMO 2020 compliance functions, including fuel oil checks and laboratory tests.

ELECTRONIC SYSTEM

The MPA says it will engage fuel-testing companies for detailed laboratory analysis of fuel oil samples. In addition, it will update its electronic pre-arrival notification system for ships to declare their method of compliance before they arrive in Singapore.

The MPA stresses that it is also working closely with the shipping industry to ease the transition. It will establish training and familiarisation plans, and, in conjunction with the Singapore Shipping Association, has made available technical guides on its website outlining options available for ship operators to comply with the new regime.

US AND CANADA ARE USED TO ENFORCING TOUGH EMISSIONS MANDATE

Michael Juliano

In gearing up to implement IMO 2020, the US and Canada bring years of experience enforcing an even stronger mandate.

Since 2015, the North American emissions control area (ECA) has capped the allowable sulphur content in bunkers to 0.1% for ships sailing along their coasts.

The US Coast Guard (USCG) can hold non-compliant ships within the ECA and issue civil penalties, spokeswoman Lieutenant Amy Midgett says.

"As per current IMO guidelines for port state control [PSC] officers, the use of fuel oil exceeding the sulphur limit is a deficiency of a serious nature and may warrant detention," she adds.

The USCG refers penalties to the Environmental Protection Agency, which levies fines from \$150 per tonne of fuel oil at 0.15% sulphur content to \$750 for every tonne at 3.5% or more.

The USCG conducts 9,500 PSC



CHECK IT OUT: US Coast Guard inspectors go into action

Photo: Craig Groman/USCG

examinations on foreign vessels per year to ensure compliance with the ECA and current IMO guidelines to prevent air pollution.

"The Coast Guard believes the IMO and its member states are working diligently to ensure consistent enforcement of Marpol Annex VI requirements and

supports them in this effort," Midgett says.

Certain ships in the ECA are subject to different sulphur limits, but they will also need to adhere to at least the 0.5% limit set by IMO 2020.

The USCG may conduct laboratory tests on fuel oils,

particularly to support civil cases or criminal prosecution.

USCG policies on marine fuel sulphur content were discussed at last month's meeting of the IMO's Pollution Prevention and Response subcommittee in London.

Transport Canada is developing a "concentrated inspection

campaign" with other nations to enforce emission standards, according to spokesman Simon Rivet.

"There is already a system in place to address and monitor any non-compliance fuel issues," he tells TradeWinds.

"Any decisions to select a ship for fuel testing would be based on a number of factors, including ship compliance and company compliance history, inspection requirements and review to verify sulphur content.

"The government's fuel verification policy allows for onboard ship fuel sampling and testing at all major Canadian ports to ensure compliance with fuel sulphur content standards. A ship found in breach of the regulation is subject to enforcement action."

Enforcement measures range from verbal warnings to legal action. Canada's transport minister may also deny the issuing of documents and detain non-compliant ships.