



Dienststelle Schiffssicherheit BG Verkehr



BUNDESAMT FÜR
SEESCHIFFFAHRT
UND
HYDROGRAPHIE

Implementation of the sulphur limits applicable since 01 January 2020 as well as the carriage ban of heavy fuel oil since 01 March 2020

Since 01 January 2020, the sulphur content of the fuel oil on board ships worldwide may not exceed the limit of 0.50 %. In the Emission Control Areas (ECAs) of the North and Baltic Sea, a limit of 0.10 % sulphur content of fuel oil used on board ships has been applicable since 01 January 2015.

In addition, on 01 March 2020 the global carriage ban adopted by IMO regarding fuel oil intended for use and with a sulphur content of more than 0.50 % entered into force. Exceptions apply for ships operating an Exhaust Gas Cleaning System (EGCS, so called scrubber; refer to MEPC.320(74)) or making use of other approved equivalent procedures on board in accordance with Regulation 4 of MARPOL Annex VI.

Both the compliance with the sulphur content upper limit in fuel oils that apply from 01 January 2020 as well as the carriage ban of high sulphur heavy fuel oil from 01 March 2020 apply without a transitional period. Monitoring of compliance in German ports is either conducted by the waterway police of the Federal States of Germany or port State control. In addition, the ship emission monitoring network of the BSH conducts constant monitoring of the exhaust plumes of ships entering and departing German ports.

If it is not possible for ship operators to obtain compliant fuel oil, the relevant attempts to do so must be documented adequately and reported to the competent authorities of the port state (psc-germany@bg-verkehr.de und marpol@bsh.de) using the pertinent report form (Fuel Oil Non-Availability Report, FONAR, LINK) when entering a German port or traveling via German waters or the German Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This equally applies to ships flying the German flag. A valid FONAR might be considered as exculpatory in preliminary proceedings. With regard to possible offences against the carriage ban of heavy fuel oil, it is noted that during port State control inspections these are regularly considered sufficient grounds to detain a ship.

It is further noted that no exceptional permissions are granted in cases where the admissible sulphur limits are exceeded.

Please direct any questions at

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