

RESOLUTION A.565(14) adopted on 20 November 1985
RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES TO PREVENT THE ILLEGAL OR ACCIDENTAL
USE OF LOW FLASHPOINT CARGO OIL AS FUEL



ASSEMBLY - 14th session
Agenda item 10(b)

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THE ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING Article 15(j) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization concerning the functions of the Assembly in relation to regulations and guidelines concerning maritime safety,

NOTING that the Maritime Safety Committee adopted a recommendation on the danger of the use of low flashpoint cargo oil as fuel (MSC/Circ.347),

NOTING ALSO that this practice is contradictory to regulation II-2/15.1 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended,

NOTING FURTHER that in spite of the information provided in that circular the dangerous practice of the use of low flashpoint cargo oil as fuel is continuing,

RECOGNIZING the urgent need for such practice, whether illegal or accidental, to be discontinued,

HAVING CONSIDERED the recommendation made by the Maritime Safety Committee at its fifty-first session,

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1. ADOPTS the Recommended Procedures to Prevent the Illegal or Accidental Use of Low Flashpoint Cargo Oil as Fuel, the text of which is set out in the Annex to the present resolution;
2. REQUESTS all Governments concerned to bring the Recommended Procedures to the notice of shipowners and seafarers, as well as to surveyors and control officers concerned.

ANNEX

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES TO PREVENT THE ILLEGAL OR ACCIDENTAL USE OF LOW FLASHPOINT CARGO OIL AS FUEL

- 1 For some time an irregular and unsafe practice has existed whereby low flashpoint cargo oil has been transferred to bunker systems where it was used as fuel. This is a serious source of danger to ships and persons both at sea and in port and also to shore installations.
- 2 In some known cases, this transfer had been carried out by means of a cross connection made between the cargo and bunker piping systems.
- 3 In this connection it should be noted that a casualty occurred aboard a tanker where crude oil leaked from a cargo tank into an adjacent bunker tank. The crude oil was then transferred together with the fuel oil into a heavy day tank and subsequently into a double bottom tank. As the tanker was under repair the flame of an oxyacetylene torch being used for repair work ignited the hydrocarbon vapours which had escaped into the machinery space.
- 4 Member Governments should take note of the possibility of either deliberate or accidental contamination of the bunkers by oil cargo with the consequential risk to persons, ships and shore installations.

5 The Guidelines on Surveys Required by the 1978 SOLAS Protocol, the International Bulk Chemical Code and the International Gas Carrier Code (resolution A.560(14)) require the examination of cargo and bunker piping systems (paragraph 3.3.4.1.4). Member Governments are urged to instruct their nominated surveyors or recognized organizations to give special attention during surveys to the possibility of cross connections being made between the cargo and bunker piping systems.

6 Member Governments are also urged to advise shipowners and crew members of the need to carry out routine checks on the flammability of bunker spaces and to further advise shipowners and ship repairers that such a check should always be carried out before any "hot-work" is started in the region of bunker spaces.

7 Random sampling of bunker tanks will act as a deterrent against the deliberate use of crude oil cargo to supplement the fuel oil. Member Governments are urged to incorporate this into their survey procedures under the 1978 SOLAS Protocol (resolution A.560(14)). Additionally, wherever there are clear grounds to believe (due to the odour or hydrocarbon vapours in the machinery space, irregularities in the cargo or bunker pipework or otherwise) that a ship may be using cargo oil as fuel, consignees, cargo officers, surveyors or inspectors should test the percentage of the lower flammable limit of the vapour in the bunker or bunker tanks by the use of an appropriate combustible gas indicator. If the percentage of the lower flammable limit is above 50, a sample should be taken of the liquid contents of the bunker tank and analysed by a laboratory recognized by the Administration of the flag State or port State concerned to ascertain the flashpoint using the closed cup method.

8 If the flashpoint is below 60°C, except when authorized under regulation II-2/15 of the 1974 SOLAS Convention as amended, the flag State Administration should be notified and cargo operations and/or bunkering stopped. In consultation with parties concerned (master, port services and ship inspectorate, consignee, shipowner, classification society as appropriate, etc.) a plan of measures to be taken is to be drawn up with the objective of removing the contaminated fuel, washing and gas-freeing the tanks and associated piping.

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