HELSINKI COMMISSION
Baltic Marine Environment
Protection Commission

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 24/6

Adopted 25 June 2003
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

GUIDELINES ON BUNKERING OPERATIONS AND SHIP TO SHIP CARGO TRANSFER OF OILS, SUBJECT TO ANNEX I OF MARPOL 73/78, IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Article 8 of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (the Helsinki Convention), in which the Contracting Parties undertake to take measures in order to protect the Baltic Sea Area from pollution from ships,

RECALLING ALSO Article 14 of the Helsinki Convention, in which the Contracting Parties undertake individually and jointly to maintain adequate ability and to respond to pollution incidents,

NOTING that bunkering operations and ship to ship cargo transfer of oils, subject to Annex I of MARPOL 73/78, take place in the Baltic Sea Area,

NOTING FURTHER the increase in the annual number of such bunkering operations and ship to ship cargo transfers in the Baltic Sea Area,

NOTING ALSO that spills of oil have occurred during operations,

DESIRING to prevent spills during these bunkering operations and ship to ship cargo transfers in the Baltic Sea Area,

RECOMMENDS that the Governments of the Contracting Parties apply the guidelines, as given in the annex to this Recommendation to bunkering operations and ship to ship cargo transfer of oils, subject to Annex I of MARPOL 73/78, carried out in their territorial seas,

RECOMMENDS ALSO that the Governments of the Contracting Parties, in accordance with international law, apply the same guidelines to bunkering operations and ship to ship cargo transfer of oils, subject to Annex I of MARPOL 73/78, conducted outside their territorial seas,

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the Contracting Parties report on the implementation of this Recommendation, in accordance with Article 16 (1) of the Helsinki Convention, one year after its adoption.

Guidelines on Bunkering Operations and Ship to Ship Cargo Transfer of oils, subject to Annex I of MARPOL 73/78, in the Baltic Sea Area

1 General

1.1 Application

.1 These guidelines should apply to all bunkering operations and ship to ship cargo transfer of oils, subject to Annex I of MARPOL 73/78**,** which take place within the Baltic Sea Area.

1.2 Definitions

.1 "Bunker ship": A ship, which delivers bunkers to a receiving ship.

.2 "Receiving ship": A ship, which receives bunkers or other oils covered by Annex I of MARPOL 73/78

.3 "Bunkers": Fuel oils and other petroleum products necessary for the operation of a ship.

.4 "Bunker operation": Transfer of fuel oil and other petroleum products on tank to tank basis.

.5 "Primary fenders": Large fenders used to absorb the impact energy of berthing and wide enough to prevent contact between the ships.

.6 "Secondary fenders": Fenders ready for use during the berthing operation.

.7 "Baltic Sea Area": Area as defined in Article 1 of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992

2 Bunkering operations

2.1 Control

.1 The overall control with the bunker operation should lie with the master of the receiving ship.

2.2 Hoses for bunker transfer operations

.1 The hoses used for bunker transfer should be specially designed and constructed for handling petroleum products and be of a strength and size which makes them suitable for the actual operation. The hoses should be of adequate length to allow different movement of the bunker ship and the receiving ship.

.2 The hoses including flanges and bolts should be pressure tested in accordance with the specification to which they are manufactured before use, periodically every 4 month and after the hose has been repaired or exposed to excessive strains. The date of the latest pressure testing should be indicated on the hose. A record of inspection and pressure testing of the hoses and the specifications from the manufacturers should be kept on board the bunker ship and be available at all times.

.3 All lifting gear including support arrangement for the hoses should be made for the purpose and kept in a good condition.

2.3 Emergency stop

.1 It should be possible to stop the bunkering supply pumps momentary at a place close to the manifold on the bunker ship.

2.4 Before the bunkering operation commences

.1 Both the bunker ship and the receiving ship should accept the area in which the bunkering operation is intended to take place, taking into consideration the weather and sea condition as well as the weather forecast.

.2 A mooring plan should be agreed beforehand between the bunker vessel and the receiving ship and the mooring should be carried out in accordance with this plan. The mooring equipment should be of a recognized standard and the mooring lines of good quality intended for use in the actual operation.

.3 The receiving ship should be safe at anchor on a steady heading before the bunkering operation commences. The bunker ship should preferably approach the receiving ship by moving forward. Primary fenders of a recognized standard and strength should be positioned along the hull of the bunker ship and secondary fenders should be ready for use during the berthing operation.

.4 Direct radio contact via VHF-radios shall be established between the responsible persons on the bunker ship and the receiving ship and be kept throughout the operation. If portable radios are used, spare batteries should be readily available.

.5 All scuppers on the bunker ship and the receiving ship that are affected by the bunkering should be plugged.

.6 The hoses should be securely connected and a responsible officer both on the bunker ship and the receiving ship should approve the work done. The hoses should be rigged in such a way that movements of the ships will not damage them.

.7 Checks should be carried out that all valves in use for the operation on board the receiving ship are set to the right tanks. Spill trays of adequate size should be placed on board both ships.

.8 The bunker ship should have equipment readily available to combat minor oil spills at sea.

.9 The responsible officer for the bunker operation of the receiving ship should agree to a maximum pump rate and the topping up pump rate. The bunkering operation may only commence upon a direct order from the receiving ship to the bunker vessel to start the pumping.

.10 An overall contingency plan covering the known and predicted risk scenarios for the bunkering operations should be developed by the bunker ship. The plan should be developed in addition to the Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (SOPEP).

.11 A list of the nearest national contact point to be contacted in case of a pollution accident should be readily available on both ships. The bunker ship should before the bunkering operation commences provide the receiving ship with a list of the nearest national contact points.

.12 Before the bunkering operation commences a bunkering plan should be on board the ships and the checklist shown in ***Attachment 1*** should be satisfactorily completed and signed by the masters of both the bunker ship and the receiving ship. The checklist should be kept on board the bunker ship and the receiving ship for at least two years and be available at all times.

2.5 During the bunkering operation

.1 Throughout the bunkering operation a responsible person trained in the operation should be stationed at the manifold area to observe the hose and connections for leaks on both the bunker ship and the receiving ship. The responsible person on the bunker ship should have means to immediately stop the operation if leakage is observed or on request from the receiving ship.

.2 The oil level in the tanks of the receiving ship should be carefully checked by measuring the ullage. The greatest caution should be exercised during "topping up".

.3 If the weather or sea conditions deteriorate to such an extent that there is any doubt regarding the safety of the operation it should be terminated.

.4 The hoses should be drained and blinded before being brought back to the bunker ship.

2.6 Action in case of incidental pollution

.1 If any oil spills or other incidental pollution occur the contingency plan should be brought into operation, which should include immediate reporting of the incident to the nearest contact point as referred to in paragraph 2.4.11.

3 Ship to ship cargo transfer

.1 Any ship to ship cargo transfer of oils, subject to Annex I of MARPOL 73/78, while the ships are within the territorial seas of a Baltic Sea State should be carried out in accordance with the local regulations and in accordance with the latest recommendations contained in "Ship to Ship Transfer Guide" (Petroleum) issued by International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF).

.2 Before any such ship to ship cargo transfer may take place permission from the concerned National Authority of the costal state should be obtained.

.3 The ship to ship transfer should only take place when one or both ships are safe at anchor. Ship to ship transfer should not take place under ice conditions.

.4 If any oil spills or other incidental pollution occur action as required in paragraph 2.6.1 should be taken.

4 Management for safe operation of ships

.1 The procedures in the present guidelines should be a part of the safety management system on ships required to carry a Safety Management Certificate in accordance with chapter IX of the International Convention for the Safety of Live at Sea, 1974.

Attachment 1

Bunkering Checklist

This checklist should be filled in before a ship receives bunkers from a bunker ship.

Name of bunker ship: ……..…….	Name of receiving ship: ……...……..
Place of bunkering: ……..……..…	Date of bunkering: ……..……..
Estimated time of start: ……	Estimated time of completion: ……..…….

For an affirmative answer, please tick the appropriate box ☑.	**Bunker ship**	**Receiving ship**	**Remarks**
1. Do the receiving ship and the bunker ship accept the area for the bunkering operation taking into account weather conditions and weather forecast?	❑	❑	
2. Is the area outside normal shipping traffic?	❑	❑	
3. Is the receiving ship safe at anchor?		❑	
4. Is a mooring plan in place and agreed, and is the mooring of the ships carried out in accordance with this plan?	❑	❑	
5. Are the primary fenders in their proper positions along the hull of the bunker ship and are secondary fenders, if required, in place?	❑		
6. Are safe communications via VHF radios agreed?	❑	❑	
7. Are all scuppers affected by the bunkering operation closed on board the receiving ship and the bunkering ship?	❑	❑	
8. Are the hoses for the bunkering operations tested during the last four months period and are they in a good condition?	❑	❑	
9. Are the receiving tanks sounded and is the quantity to be transferred agreed?	❑	❑	
10. Are the valves on board the receiving ship set to their right position?		❑	
11. Are the bunkering hoses satisfactorily connected on board both ships?	❑	❑	
12. Are spill trays of adequate size in place on board both ships?	❑	❑	
13. Are blind flanges for use after disconnection of hoses available?	❑	❑	
14. Is the maximum pump rate and topping up pump rate agreed by the responsible officers on both ships?	❑	❑	
15. Is the responsible person instructed and on watch close to the emergency stop on the bunkering ship?	❑		
16. Is equipment readily available to combat minor oil spills at sea?	❑		
17. Is an overall contingency plan available and is the correct contact point ashore for oil pollution incidents checked?	❑	❑	
18. Are navigational signals, indicating bunkering operations, displayed?	❑	❑	

For the bunkering ship

I have checked all the items of the checklist and have satisfied myself that the entries, to the best of my knowledge, are correct. I have also taken measures for repeated checks whenever necessary.

Date: ……..…….

Signature: ……..

For the receiving ship

I have checked all the items of the checklist and have satisfied myself that the entries, to the best of my knowledge, are correct. I have also taken measures for repeated checks whenever necessary.

Date: ……..…….

Signature: ……..