



Bunker Protection Team Inc.

CL-01/2014

Real bunker survey or illusion of it?

The most of Charterers use survey services to monitor the bunkering operation process and ensure receiving the total amount of ordered fuel from the supplier .

The presence of a bunker surveyor on board during bunkering operation could be considered questionable. What is the real necessity for surveyor to be there? What should he/she to control?

If it is necessary to establish correctness of all bunker figures after transferring fuel from a barge, the statement of fact from a Chief Engineer is good enough. The payment to a bunker supplier can be made based on this statement. When data received from the Chief Engineer satisfies Charterer the presence of a surveyor on board is redundant.

Otherwise, if Charterer wants to check opposite side of the bunkering process on board of the inspected vessel the appointed Surveyor has to be well familiarized with vessel's systems and equipment. In that situation Surveyor has to have some engineering knowledge on how to operate modern monitoring systems, how to read drawings of vessel's systems and its electrical diagrams. These skills are needed for a surveyor to be

able to check the existing “practice” of the crew that end up hiding some amount of fuel oil and selling it in the convenient port during sludge disposal operations.

In the announcements of owners of the surveying companies, which execute bunker survey services, a high level of service is declared meanwhile the survey done in standard manner: *check vessel’s draft - measure the level of fuel in the tanks by sounding - check the temperature of the fuel in the tanks.*

The number of surveying companies in bunker field has increased and new companies still appear on the market. The present situation in the bunker survey industry could be compared with that in the world fleet in the last decade. The shortage of well qualified personnel is the main problem which most of the companies face. Without wishing to offend anyone, but watching the actions of the surveyor without at least basic technical knowledge just cause a smile. She/he is certainly trying to carry out his duties in good way, but this is clearly not enough. That situation opens excellent outlooks for personnel who hold mechanical or electrical engineering knowledge and experience.

The shortage of well qualified personnel caused predictable result – surveyors just reflects data which chief engineers present to them. Experience shows us that there is certain percentage of chief engineers who are involved in fuel oil manipulations. Being on board, a surveyor is under influence of Chief Engineer's authority. As a person who is well familiarized with the vessel’s system and level/temperature monitoring equipment, the Chief Engineer, in case of his non ethical attitude, can hide some amount of fuel oil. The concealed fuel oil quantity is variable depending on vessel size.

The browsing of internet has shown interesting things. ***The surveying companies are declaring proudly about high-performance service with attractive results but vessel's crews on the forums are boasting that easily can deceive surveyor and subsequently sell fuel in China, India, Brazil, etc. Based on our internal statistics, we intend to confirm that last party at this moment wins in "competition".***

The target of any surveyor who takes part in bunker survey is to present true information about fuel oil tanks content in the moment of inspection. The surveyor has only few hours in the port to solve a problem while the crew prepares for the survey during all of their sea passage.

Prior to call to any surveyor think what you really need from them – nicely prepared report or real result?

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