

21 March 2017

FOBAS Bulletin: Singapore Bunker Supplier Panoil Petroleum Suspended Over Irregularities with Piping Fixtures

Applicability: Ship owners and operators

A press release made by Singapore MPA on Tuesday 14th March, stated that they had suspended the harbour craft licence of bunker supplier Panoil Petroleum. This comes after Mass Flow Meter (MFM) irregularities regarding piping fixtures were detected on its 5 bunker tankers during a routine inspection and is pending further investigation.

As quoted by an MPA spokeswoman "During suspension, these bunker tankers will not be allowed to conduct any bunker deliveries, conduct ship to ship operations or leave the port of Singapore. MPA was continuing its checks on bunker tankers to ensure compliance with mass flow meter regulations". "MPA will not hesitate to take action against any bunkering malpractices in the port of Singapore. Any licensee found to have contravened any terms and conditions of the licence will have their licenses either suspended or cancelled" the MPA said in a statement.

In order to register a quantity greater than the actual delivered quantity to the vessel by MFM, bunkers may be siphoned back to the bunker tanker via these irregular piping fixtures found after the meter connection point and whilst bunkering is in progress.

One of the key roles of the bunker surveyor is to check the integrity of the MFM piping fixtures as specified in Technical Reference for Bunker Mass Flow Metering (TR 48). Even with MFM technology in use, this case underlines the importance of appointing a reputable bunker surveyor who can inspect the bunker barge lines for any irregularities in addition to cross checking the seal verification report, inspecting the seals and taking MFM readings.

As stated in one of our earlier Service updates dated 11th July 2016, "MFM is not a "plug and play" system and MPA has, together with the industry, developed a process that ensures MFM system integrity in Singapore is robust and delivers quantity measurement readings buyers and sellers of bunkers can rely on. We will keep you updated on the anticipated findings and actions taken by MPA to Panoil Petroleum subject to availability.

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