

MEMBER ALERT



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APRIL 07, 2020

BUNKERING AND COVID-19

COVID-19 has created a number of challenges for shipowners relevant to compliance with the January 1, 2020 amendments to the MARPOL 73/78 Convention, Annex VI, regulation 18, Fuel Oil Quality.

The “MARPOL delivered sample” as per MARPOL73/78, Annex VI, regulation 18 is the mandatory sampling which needs to be taken during the entire bunker supply operation in the presence of all parties, i.e. vessel personnel, bunker supplier and, if present, the bunker inspector (see the attached diagram).

It is important that all parties involved should establish prior knowledge about the local regulations of the port in which the bunkering is to take place.

The shipowner’s surveyor, vessel’s Chief Engineer or other representative, charterer’s surveyor and bunker supplier representative should then agree a COVID-19 survey protocol, including their policies in regard to physical contact, before bunker operations are commenced. At a minimum, the protocol should address, but not necessarily be limited to, the following elements of best practice, taking account of Chapter 1 of the Club’s [Bunkering—A Compendium](#):

1. “social distancing” measures already recommended by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) should be implemented – individuals standing at least six feet (two meters) apart from each other;
2. all involved should wear the proper PPEs including masks, goggles, and gloves as per paragraph 8.4 of [MEPC.1/Circ.875/Add.1, Guidance on Best Practice for Fuel Oil Suppliers for Assuring the Quality of Fuel Oil Delivered to Ships](#));
3. the bunker station should be disinfected before and after the operation. All vessels should already be equipped with disinfectants appropriate for COVID-19. Disinfection should include flanges, ends of bunker hoses, valve handles, handrails, platforms etc. If a vessel does not have chlorine-based disinfectants, they should be ordered from appropriate suppliers;
4. the ends of bunker hoses and flanges should be disinfected as soon as hoses are swung aboard;
5. gangways, handrails and access areas should be cleaned and disinfected;
6. shore personnel should not be allowed into the vessel’s accommodation other than at a designated place such as the cargo control room, stevedores’ offices, etc. which are specifically identified as areas under hygienic control;
7. when bunkering, no physical contact should be made with barge personnel, and all paperwork should be handled with latex gloves;

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8. crew members should be reminded to wear PPE **at all times** when taking drip samples and drip sample equipment should always be disinfected prior to use;
9. sample bottles should be disinfected before they are handed to shore personnel; and
10. all coveralls should be laundered following completion of the bunkering operation.

Use of cameras or video recorders in lieu of personnel being on site during bunkering and fuel sampling

In lieu of bunkering personnel being physically present onboard the vessel for the duration of the bunkering operation, and the collection and securing of bunker samples, shipowners, charterers and bunker suppliers may consider the use of explosion-proof cameras or video recorders. Subject to mutual agreement between the parties, the taking, sealing and tagging of samples might be witnessed through a camera or video recorder and the exchange accomplished without the need for bunker barge crew to come on board the vessel.

If cameras or video recorders are to be used, a protocol should be established for how these recordings are shared between the shipowner, charterer and the bunker supplier.

Members are reminded that the Club maintains dedicated website space containing a range of information and updates on both the COVID-19 virus and bunkering, respectively, at:

https://www.american-club.com/page/infectious_diseases and

<https://www.american-club.com/page/bunker-fuels>

Your Managers recommend that Members take note of this information and be guided accordingly.

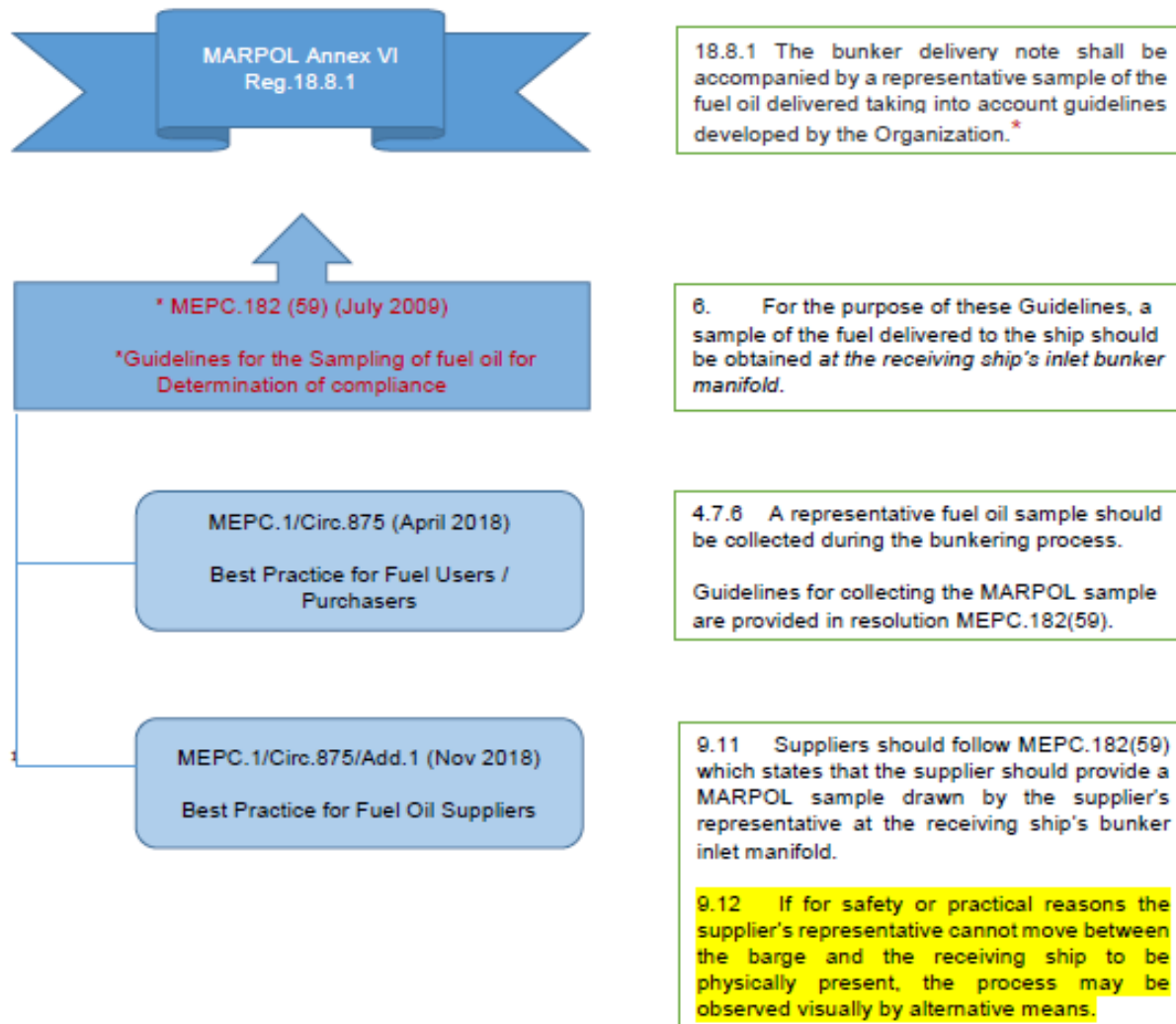
The American Club also thanks INTERTANKO for its inputs to this guidance.

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¹ ISO 8217:2017, Chapter 3 (application) states that this Standard specifies the required properties for fuels at the time and place of custody transfer. The IMO's Best Practice for fuel oil suppliers, section 3.1.1 (goals / objectives) states "bunkers delivered at the point of custody, which can be the receiving ship's rail or manifold, to meet the buyer's ordered specifications".

(Figure 3. MARPOL delivered sample, SS600 and ISO 8217), INTERTANKO 2020 Practical Guide