

Title: COMMUNICATION FAILURE DURING BUNKERING OPERATION RESULTING IN A MINOR OIL SPILL IN PORT

What happened

Vessel in port, bunker operations completed

Once the fuel line blowdown procedures were complete, the main valve of fuel oil line was closed in the Bunker Station. The fuel oil supplier started to disconnect the fuel hose on the pier while still connected to the vessel bunker station, failing to communicate with vessel in order to receive the green light to proceed.

Due to a gap height of about four meters between the pier and the bunker station, this reckless action resulted in small spill of oil in the water, ship's hull and on the pier.



Ship response in accordance with the Sopep.

Cleaning completed by crew and fuel supplier, at satisfaction of the Port Authority



Root causes / contributory factors

Root Causes and contributory factors:

- Inadequate implementation of Company's procedures (checklists)
- Communication: lack of planning and communication between ship personnel and fuel supplier.
- Inadequate Blowdown procedures
- Inadequate assessment of external conditions: considering the gap height existing between vessel and pier the fuel hose should have been disconnected from the vessel, blinded and positioned on the pier.

Proposed Corrective / Preventive Actions

Vessel:

- Revisit the Bunkering operation procedures to ensure that all safety measures are considered and implemented.
- Ensure that effective communication and planning are always exchanged between parties.

Office:

- Circulate this Case Study to all managed vessels as lesson to be learned
- Review bunkering procedures and related forms/checklists

Reference

- VMS 5.0.1“ BUNKERING “ Operation – ship operation – ship technical operation – bunkering procedures
- Form OP34 “Bunker Transfer Procedures”
- Form OP35 “ Bunkering/Transferring Operations Check List “

Completed