

Diesel Doctor - more on your fuel problems



Peter Weide of Marship at the recent Skipper Expo Int. Galway

Gone are the days of filling up your tank and forgetting about it.

It was great to meet so many of you at what was a brilliant Skipper Expo in Galway last month. The countdown is certainly on for Aberdeen. From what you told us, it certainly appears that fuel issues are on the increase and it's not just blocked filters from diesel bug that are giving you problems.

What is causing these issues?

We knew that the 0.1% level of sulphur introduced 1st January 2015 was going to have an impact, but even we were surprised by your comments. We speculated last year that the reduction of sulphur was definitely going to see an increase in the number of vessels suffering with diesel bug, but it seems to be about more than just the bug.

The effect of low-sulphur
A number of you reported an increase in fuel pipe and injector failure. We can only attribute this to lack of lubricity, caused by the refining process (hydro-processing) used to remove sulphur from fuel. During this process the sulphur is replaced with hydrogen. This makes for a cleaner burning fuel; however, hydrogen is highly reactive, it reacts with other components in the fuel reducing its lubricity.

Diesel injection equipment relies on diesel as a lubricant. The fuel's lubricity is an indication of the amount of wear or scarring that will occur between two metal parts covered with fuel as they come into contact. Low lubricity

fuel causes higher wear and scarring thereby shortening the components life.

Protect your engine

Recently on-board a UK operated tug we reviewed a bunker report showing sulphur levels in the fuel were less than 0.03%. This means the fuel contains next to zero lubrication, it was effectively dry. This will most certainly cause the issues described in Galway. The official test for sulphur is ISO8754, the minimum it can detect is 0.03%.

So, adding a lubricity additive is the minimum you should do to protect your engine. Most additives contain other chemicals but depending on your operation these are often not required. You could be paying for something you don't need. A stand-alone lubricity additive is very economical at often only a few Euros per 1000 litres. Need help?

Call us OR visit our website www.marship.eu or email us at info@marship.eu.

MarShip UK, dedicated to looking after the vital elements of your engine - Fuel, Air and Oil. Peter Weide (MD), formally a Chief Engineer has worked in the marine industry for over 20 years. A manager with Mobile Marine Lubricants, director with A & P Ship Repairers and latterly Service Sales Manager for Wartsila, he has dedicated his working life to developing proactive engine solutions.



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