

BUSINESS DAILY

SHIPPING & LOGISTICS

Two firms given licences to supply ships with cleaner fuel

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SUMMARY

- Alba Petroleum and Alfoss Energy Limited, Mombasa were contracted in December last year to ensure there is adequate supply of low sulphur fuel with 0.5 percent sulphur content, compared with the previous limit of 3.5 percent.
- The global rule which applies to all seagoing vessels, both cargo and fishing vessels, is aimed at reducing air pollution by cutting sulphur oxide emissions.

Two companies have been licensed to supply low Sulphur fuel for ships making call at the Port of Mombasa, under the new International Maritime Organisation (IMO) global sulphur cap 2020 rule which came into force starting January 1 this year.

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The Kenya Maritime Authority (KMA) Director General George Okong'o said they would conduct random inspections of all ships docking at the port to ensure they comply with the new law.

Mr Okongo said the two firms have adequate stock to supply all ships and fishing vessels operating on the Kenyan waters.

Mr Okongo said all ship operators, oil refiners and bunker suppliers must comply with the new law.

"The process of implementing the new law started after the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention) was adopted in 1997 and reviewed in 2012 to address air pollution from ships. This is a global law and we shall ensure all vessels comply," said Mr Okong'o.

He said the MARPOL Convention is meant to cut sulphur-oxide emissions from ships by 77 percent which will be an annual reduction of about 8.5 million tonnes.

With the increasing ship traffic at the Mombasa port, controlling emissions is a critical matter and the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) in an earlier statement said it had set measures to comply with the policy.

The regulation which is being implemented globally has been welcomed by the International Chamber of Ships (ICS) and the chamber has already shared comprehensive Guidance on Compliance with stakeholders for compliance.

In the MARPOL regulations, all ships of 400 gross tonnage and above engaged in voyages to ports or offshore terminals under the jurisdiction of other parties have to have an International Air Pollution Prevention Certificate, issued by the ship's flag State.

To acquire the certificate, ships need to use low sulphur fuel oil to meet IMO requirements while refineries may blend fuel oil with a high (non-compliant) sulphur content with that with a sulphur content lower than the required sulphur content to achieve a compliant fuel oil.

IMO regulations first came into force in 2005, under Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships.

Limiting sulphur emission by ships will improve air quality and protect the environment as sulphur oxide is harmful to humans and marine ecosystem.

Sulphur emissions causes respiratory problems and lung diseases and once released into the atmosphere, they lead to acid rain which can harm crops, forests and aquatic animals and contributes to the acidification of oceans.

Moving to cleaner fuels could add substantially to logistics costs, from an estimated \$400 a tonne for fuel oil today to as much as \$600 a tonne, according to the International Chamber of Shipping. Higher shipping costs may be absorbed throughout the manufacturing and transport supply chains.

This year, all states are also required to ensure they create port receptions facilities to reduce marine litter in line with the new IMO laws to reduce ocean pollution.

IMO technical officer Roel Hoenders in an earlier interview said marine pollution by fishing vessels and ships has been on the increase globally hence there was need for implementation of the IMO Action Plans adopted by state ports so as to address marine plastic litter and fuel emissions from ships.

Mr Hoenders said they encourage port states to fulfill their treaty obligations to comply with the new rules and provide adequate port reception facilities.

Port reception facilities are a place that international shipping ports must provide to collect residues, oily mixtures, and garbage generated from an ocean-going vessel to avoid contaminants generated by ships from being discharged directly to the ocean.

The IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) cited marine litter and fuel pollution as a major problem which is threatening marine life.