

Vessels required to use compliant fuel within Hong Kong waters from today

The Air Pollution Control (Fuel for Vessels) Regulation (Cap. 311AB) (the Regulation) came into effect today (January 1). All vessels, except for specified vessel types as set out in the Regulation, are required to use compliant fuel within Hong Kong waters, irrespective of whether they are sailing or berthing.

Compliant fuel includes low-sulphur marine fuel with sulphur content not exceeding 0.5 per cent, liquefied natural gas or any other fuel approved by the Director of Environmental Protection. If a vessel uses emission reduction technology that can achieve the same or less emission of sulphur dioxide when compared with using low-sulphur marine fuel, it may be exempted from using compliant fuel.

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said that from today, ocean-going vessels (OGVs) that are using heavy fuel oil (with an average sulphur content of 2.6 per cent) must switch to compliant fuel before entering Hong Kong waters. The Regulation also requires the OGVs to:

- (a) record the time when the vessel enters or exits the waters of Hong Kong, and the particulars about the fuel switch operations in its log book;
- (b) keep the written procedures for conducting fuel switch operations on board; and
- (c) keep the ship log book and bunker delivery notes on board for a period of three years and have them readily available for inspection.

The master and owner concerned of any vessel using non-compliant fuel within the waters of Hong Kong will be liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and imprisonment for six months. Shipmasters and ship owners of OGVs who fail to record or keep the required particulars will also be liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for three months.

The Government has been implementing the Air Pollution Control (Ocean Going Vessels) (Fuel at Berth) Regulation (the Fuel at Berth Regulation) (Cap. 311AA) since July 1, 2015, requiring OGVs to switch to compliant fuel while berthing in Hong Kong. Since the Regulation covers the scope of control under the Fuel at Berth Regulation, the Fuel at Berth Regulation is now repealed.

"It is anticipated that implementing the Regulation will reduce the emissions of sulphur dioxide and respirable suspended particulates from OGVs by about 76 per cent and 71 per cent respectively in 2020 as compared with 2016 emission levels. This will help improve air quality and reduce health risks of the population. The implementation of the Regulation would also enhance regional collaboration on the establishment of a domestic marine emission control area in Mainland waters," the spokesman added.

For enquiries, please contact the EPD on 2594 6430 or at decainhk@epd.gov.hk.