



## **Pacific Maritime Association**

Accident Prevention Department

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San Francisco, California 94105

# **SAFETY BULLETIN # 02-06**

## **Suggested Best Practices When Bunker Barges Are Fueling Container Vessels**

### **OVERVIEW**

Often a fuel barge is tied up alongside a container ship and transfers bunkers to the vessel during container operations. Bunker barge personnel have experienced objects such as lashing bars, cones and recently containers falling onto the barge. These falling objects pose a risk to the barge personnel and could cause an oil spill if the barge or bunker hose is damaged during transfer.

Terminal management, in coordination with carrier representatives/agents and barge personnel should take all reasonable steps to eliminate the dropping of objects onto bunker barges during cargo operations

### **BEST PRACTICES**

1. Advance notification should be sent by the carrier representative/agent to the terminal and to the shipping line's planning office, at the earliest opportunity, that bunkering is planned for the ship while alongside. The information to be sent should include: when the barge is scheduled to arrive, where along the ship the barge intends to secure, and the expected duration of the bunkering operation.
2. Terminal operators should incorporate the advanced notification information of bunkering into the crane letter of operation. This will ensure that superintendents, walking boss/foremen, and longshoremen are notified that bunkering is going to take place and that an increase in Safety Awareness is required.
3. Prior to commencement of cargo operations, the boarding agents or other carrier representatives should communicate to all concerned parties (the stevedore, vessel officers, and bunker supplier), that bunkering will take place and provide communication information (contact phone numbers, cell phone numbers, radio frequencies, etc...) to all involved parties in case (during bunkering), the parties need to communicate information that would affect the safety of the bunkering operation. The boarding agent should also give the "crane letter" to the bunker vendor and the vessel duty officer.

4. The bunker barge crew should communicate to the Superintendent that the barge is alongside and working. They should also communicate when the barge is away.
5. A sign at the top of the gangway shall be provided and posted by the ships' crew or bunker vendor stating, "**CAUTION, BUNKERING OPERATION IN PROGRESS**". The vessel's crew should remove the sign when bunkering is finished.
6. The walking bosses/foremen should include bunkering information into the safety talk to the longshore workforce. The walking bosses/foremen should advise the crane operators and lashers as to where the barge is tied up along side the vessel and to take all appropriate precautions to ensure that loose gear and or containers are not accidentally dropped onto the barge.
7. Any changes to the container vessel loading/unloading operation that affects the safety of the barge or its operation should be communicated by the terminal supervision to the agent or vessel's crew.
8. Extra caution should be exercised when a crane works the outboard two stacks near the bunkering barge.
9. When and where possible, bunker barges should be secured alongside the vessel's accommodation (the house). This will reduce the exposure to cargo operations and the possibility of falling objects landing on the barge and/or tugs.
10. All lashing materials should be properly placed as to avoid the possibility of these materials from falling on to the barge or tug.