CONCEPT

Bunker Disputes and Fuel Contamination: Marine Fuel Quality, Sampling and Claims

30 November – 4 December 2026
London - Central London four-star



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Introduction:

Bunker disputes and marine fuel quality claims cost ship operators engine damage, off-hire and supplier write-offs when contaminated or short-delivered fuel is accepted without evidence that holds up later. Samples are drawn at the wrong point, delivery notes are signed without protest and notices miss contractual time bars. This Core Concept course trains technical, purchasing and claims staff to link ISO 8217 fuel properties to engine risk, control sampling and quantity evidence at the manifold, and run a claim through retesting, forensic analysis, negotiation and arbitration. Participants finish with a Bunker Quality Claim File and Argument Brief.

Course Objectives:

- Interpret an ISO 8217 test report for distillate and residual grades and link viscosity, density, cat fines, sulphur and stability results to engine and purifier risk
- Assess the compatibility and stability risk of commingling very low sulphur fuel blends and set onboard segregation and treatment controls
- Negotiate bunker supply terms covering specification, sampling point, quantity determination, claims notice and liability caps before stemming fuel
- Control the bunkering evidence chain: bunker delivery note, drip sampling, MARPOL representative sample, seals, soundings and flowmeter records
- Diagnose off-specification, contaminated and short-delivered stems using retesting, forensic chemical analysis and engine damage evidence
- Prepare and argue a bunker quality or quantity claim through notices, time bars, P&I support, mediation and arbitration

Target Audience:

- Fleet technical managers responsible for fuel quality policy, engine reliability and damage investigations
- Senior engine room officers responsible for bunker receipt, sampling witness and onboard fuel treatment
- Bunker purchasing and trading managers responsible for supplier selection, stems and supply contract terms
- Marine claims and insurance managers responsible for fuel-related claims, P&I notifications and recoveries
- Vessel operations managers responsible for bunker planning, off-hire exposure and charterer fuel disputes

Course Outline:

Day 1: Marine Fuel Grades and the Anatomy of Bunker Disputes

- ISO 8217 Distillate DM and Residual RM Category Map for Marine Fuel Buyers
- Bunker Dispute Typology: Quality, Quantity, Delay and Documentation Claims
- Parties in the Bunker Supply Chain: Physical Supplier, Trader, Broker, Barge and Receiving Vessel
- MARPOL Annex VI Sulphur Limits and Their Effect on Fuel Blending and Grade Availability
- Fleet Bunker Claims History Review and Loss Exposure Heat Map

Day 2: Fuel Properties, Compatibility and Supply Contract Terms

- Viscosity, Density and CCAI Readings and Their Link to Injection and Ignition Quality
- Aluminium Plus Silicon Cat Fines, Water and Sediment Limits Versus Purifier Capacity
- Very Low Sulphur Fuel Oil Stability, Total Sediment Potential and Spot Test Compatibility Checks
- Bunker Supply General Terms: Specification Clause, Sampling Point, Quantity Clause and Liability Cap
- Supplier Due Diligence Scorecard and Bunker Stem Confirmation Checklist

Day 3: Bunkering Evidence Chain: Sampling, Documentation and Quantity

- Pre-Delivery Meeting Agenda, Barge Tank Inspection and Manifold Hose Connection Checks
- Continuous Drip Sampling at the Receiving Manifold, Sample Splitting, Seals and Labels
- MARPOL Representative Sample Retention, Custody Log and Chain of Custody Records
- Bunker Delivery Note Review, Note of Protest and Letter of Protest Drafting
- Quantity Determination: Barge Soundings, Ullage Tables, Coriolis Mass Flowmeters and Entrained Air Cappuccino Bunkers

Day 4: Off-Specification Fuel, Contamination Cases and Engine Damage

- Retesting Protocol: Agreed Laboratory, Test Precision and Reproducibility Limits in Disputes
- Forensic Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry Screening for Chemical Contaminants
- Engine Damage Evidence: Fuel Pump Seizure, Injector Wear, Liner Scuffing and Filter Blocking
- Debunkering, Onboard Treatment or Continued Use Decision Matrix and Mitigation Duty
- Charter Party Bunker Clauses, Off-Hire Exposure and Recovery Along the Supply Chain

Day 5: Case Study: Building and Arguing a Bunker Quality Claim

- Case Vessel Brief: Contaminated Very Low Sulphur Stem with Main Engine Fuel Pump Failures
- Notice of Claim Timeline Against Contractual Time Bars and Evidence Gap Log
- P&I Club, Hull Insurer and Surveyor Roles in Fuel Claim Handling and Security
- Negotiation Role Play: Supplier, Trader and Owner Settlement Positions
- Bunker Quality Claim File and Argument Brief Presentation to a Mock Arbitration Panel

Skills You Will Gain:

- Fuel Test Report Interpretation
- Fuel Compatibility Risk Assessment
- Bunker Contract Term Negotiation
- Manifold Sampling Control
- Bunker Quantity Verification
- Forensic Fuel Analysis Review
- Engine Damage Causation Analysis
- Maritime Claim Advocacy

Why Attend This Course:

- Take back a Bunker Quality Claim File and Argument Brief built on a realistic contaminated fuel case and tested by peers
- Stop losing recoverable claims to weak samples, unsigned protests and missed notice periods
- Decide faster whether to burn, treat or debunker a suspect stem with the evidence the other side will ask for
- Exchange dispute experience with technical, purchasing, trading and insurance staff from several fleets and suppliers

Conclusion:

Bunker disputes are won or lost at the manifold, long before any lawyer reads the file. The week moves from marine fuel grades and dispute types, through fuel properties, compatibility of low sulphur blends and supply contract terms, to sampling, delivery documentation and quantity measurement at the barge. It then covers retesting, forensic analysis, engine damage causation, mitigation and charter party exposure, and closes with a contaminated fuel case in which each participant builds and argues a Bunker Quality Claim File.