



**Ports & Yachting Directorate**  
**Port Notice No. 01 of 2025**

**Transport Malta**

**To: Ship Owners and Operators**  
**Ship Agents**  
**Ship Masters**  
**Marine Terminals and Marine Facilities**

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## **Sulphur Content in Marine Fuels**

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The Authority for Transport in Malta and the Regulator for Energy and Water Services (REWS) wish to notify all concerned that the designation of the Mediterranean Sea as a whole as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (MED SOx ECA) will be enforced as from 1 May 2025 in accordance with IMO Resolution MEPC.361(79).

Furthermore, all concerned are hereby reminded of the provisions of the Quality of Fuels Regulations (S.L. 545.18). These Regulations transpose the requirements of various EU Directives relating to, amongst other, the quality of marine fuels, and must be strictly adhered to at all times by all ships, irrespective of flag, port of origin and destination port, to which they apply when such call Maltese ports and internal and territorial waters.

The maximum sulphur (SOx) content in the marine fuels used (by mass - % m/m<sup>1</sup>) referred to above must be as follows:

	From 01/01/2020	From 01/05/2025
Ships at berth in ports <sup>2</sup>	0,10%	0,10%
Passenger ships <sup>3</sup> on regular services <sup>4</sup>	0,50%	0,10%
Other ships	0,50%	0,10%
Ships navigating within the MED SOx ECA	---	0,10%

The above maximum SOx content is subject to the following exceptions:

- i. The limits shall not apply to:
  - a. Fuels used by warships and other vessels on military service, provided that these vessels shall, as is reasonable and practical, act in a manner consistent with the Regulations;
  - b. Use of fuels in a ship necessary for the specific purpose of securing the safety of a ship or saving life at sea; and

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<sup>1</sup> Concentrations for solutions = grams solute/grams solution x 100%.

<sup>2</sup> Includes ships moored and anchored; and time spent not engaged in operations.

<sup>3</sup> Ships carrying more than 12 passengers, excluding master, crew or other person employed or engaged in any capacity on board, and children under 1 years of age.

<sup>4</sup> Means a series of passenger ship crossings operated so as to serve traffic between two or more ports, or a series of voyages from and to the same port without intermediate calls either according to a published timetable; or with crossings so regular or frequent that they constitute a recognisable schedule.



- c. Any use of fuels in a ship necessitated by damage to it or its equipment:
  - i. Where the owner or master have not acted with intent or-negligently;
  - ii. All reasonable measures are taken after the occurrence of the damage to prevent or minimise excess emissions; and
  - iii. Measures are taken as soon as possible to repair the damage.
- ii. A ship may be equipped with approved emission abatement methods or use alternative technological abatement methods<sup>5</sup> which shall be allowed as an alternative to using marine fuels meeting the prescribed maximum sulphur content whilst at berth in a port or in the internal and territorial waters:
  - a. Emission abatement methods must be in compliance with the criteria specified in instruments mentioned in the Regulations, MARPOL Annex VI, IMO Resolution MEPC.340(77) establishing the 2021 Guidelines for Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems;
  - b. Alternative technological abatement methods are permitted for LNG carriers while at berth, allowing sufficient time for the crew to employ a mixture of marine fuel and boil-off gas as soon as possible after arrival at berth and as late as possible before departure.

The Authority hereby also advises that in any of the aforementioned cases, the ship must notify both the Authority and REWS accordingly before entering Maltese territorial waters.

In the event of any non-compliance, enforcement and legal action will be taken accordingly. This may include the detention of the vessel until any non-compliance has been rectified or resolved.

Port Notice 8 of 2020 is hereby being revoked.

**Capt. Fritz Farrugia**  
**Chief Officer & Harbour Master**  
**Ports & Yachting Directorate**

**4<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

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<sup>5</sup> *Emission abatement method* means any fitting, material, appliance or apparatus to be fitted in a ship or other procedure, alternative fuel, or compliance method, used as an alternative to low sulphur marine fuel meeting the requirements set out in these regulations, that is verifiable, quantifiable and enforceable. Emission abatement methods and alternative fuels (e.g. exhaust gas cleaning systems, mixtures of marine fuel and boil-off gas, LNG, fuel cells and biofuels) are permitted for ships of all flags accordingly as long as they continuously achieve reductions of SO<sub>x</sub> emissions which are at least equivalent to using compliant marine fuels.