



## Article: Be Alerted !!

### A Review of Veritas Petroleum Services Bunker Alerts (H1-2017)

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Many people dream of winning the lottery and receiving riches beyond compare, but we know this is heavily influenced by probability and chance. These factors, can also be the measure of negative events too. How many times has the term, “Wrong time, Wrong place” been used to emphasise a disaster or negative occurrence?

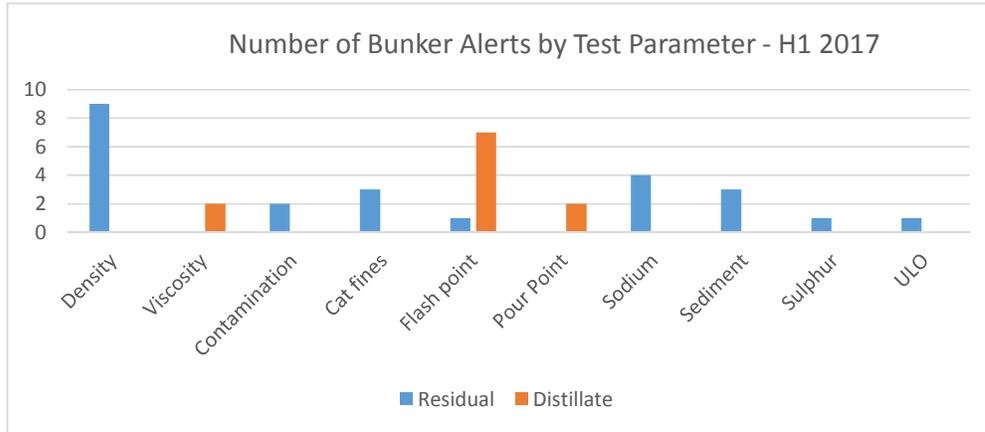
Today over 250 million tons of marine fuel are delivered to the global fleet each year and whilst there is an international quality standard in place, ISO8217, testing marine fuel is not mandatory, even though this can assist in monitoring fuel quality prior to burning, helping protect the vessel, crew and environment. Not testing fuel prior to burning, of course raises the level of probability and chance of poorer quality fuel causing costly damage or failures on board.

Veritas Petroleum Services (VPS) are the world’s leading marine fuel testing company, testing well over 100,000 fuel samples each year, from across the globes ports. This of course provides VPS and our clients, access to our huge marine fuel quality database.

Recent figures taken from this database show that over the past two years 15% of residual fuels tested exceed the standards specification for at least one test parameter. Whilst distillate fuels show 9% of all samples tested exceed their specification for at least one parameter. That means for vessels not testing their fuel they run the risk of one in every seven residual fuels giving a higher probability of problems and just over one in ten distillates doing likewise.

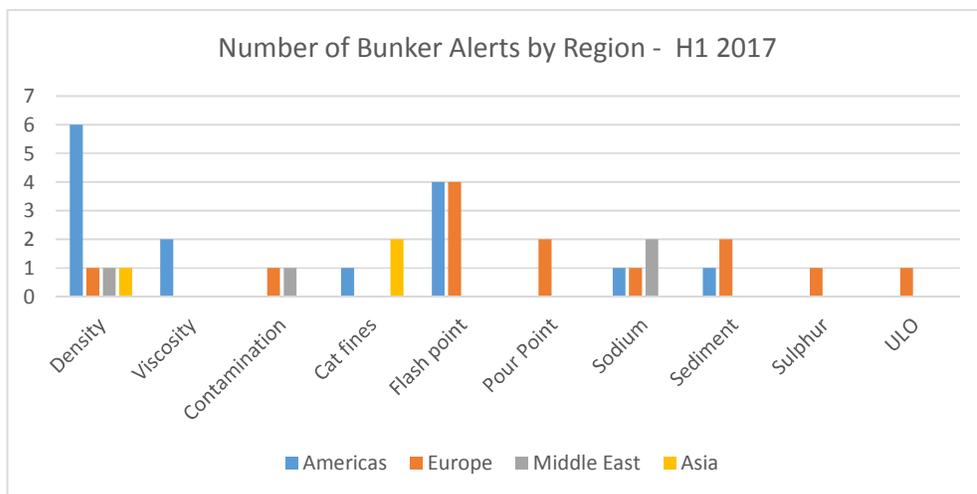
Of course determining where and when in the world such fuel will be delivered again opens up another area of probability and chance. With this in mind, VPS have for many years, monitored fuel quality on a daily basis and when necessary, issue “Bunker Alerts” exclusively to ship owners and managers who are using our testing programme. These bunker alerts inform our clients of specific ports where a short-term quality issue relating to a specific fuel grade and parameter has been identified through VPS testing. This in turn provides information to assist the client as to whether or not to take the risk in bunkering such fuel in that port at that particular time.

Reviewing the Bunker Alert status for the first six months of 2017, VPS have issued 33 such alerts to our clients. These have highlighted short-term quality issues in 24 ports, covering 22 cases relating to residual fuel and 11 relating to distillates.



The most common problematic parameter for residuals is density, with 9 Bunker alerts issued YTD. Density of course has both commercial and technical impacts for owners and managers. Please refer to a recent VPS white paper on density measurement: <http://www.v-p-s.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/VPS-Article-Density-Measurement-of-Bunker-Fuels-2.pdf> . There have been six alerts relating to density in the Americas alone, including three separate cases in New York over the first half of 2017. However, other residual parameters requiring Bunker Alerts have included, Sodium (4), Cat-fines (3), Sediment (3), Chemical Contamination (2), Flash Point, Sulphur and Used Lube Oil.

By far the most common problematic parameter for distillates is Flash Point. Seven alerts have been issued during H1 2017, for Flash Point of Distillates, four in the Americas and three in Europe. This continues a trend seen in 2016, which indicates the continuing use of low-flash blending components, with the probable aim to achieve lower sulphur containing distillate products. The remaining distillate Bunker Alerts have covered Pour Point (2) and Viscosity (2). Of course, pour point as one of the three parameters used in monitoring the cold-flow properties of distillates, is of key interest and attention.





From a regional perspective of the 24 ports requiring a Bunker Alert release, 10 were in the Americas, 9 were in Europe, 3 Middle East and 2 Asia.

If the rate at which VPS has issued Bunker Alerts over the first half of 2017 continues, then this year will see a record number of alerts being released. This of course is a strong indicator that fuel quality continues to be of concern and an area which should be monitored, ideally pre-burn in order to provide a higher level of damage prevention to the world's fleet, crew and environment.

Whilst proactive Fuel Management, Fuel Testing and receipt of Bunker Alerts, cannot be compared to winning the lottery, they can significantly assist in lowering the risk to ship owners and operators from receiving poorer quality fuel by avoiding being in the "wrong place at the wrong time".

*VPS also offers additional tests beyond the standard ISO8217 scope that can help ship owners and managers remove even more risk from their operations. Contact your local VPS office or <http://www.v-p-s.com/contact-us/> to explore what more can be done to manage your risks.*