



MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE
SHIPPING CIRCULAR
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MPA Shipping Division
460 Alexandra Road
21st Storey mTower
Singapore 119963
<http://www.mpa.gov.sg>

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Applicable to: Shipowners, ship managers, operators, agents and masters of Singapore-registered ships

INTERIM GUIDANCE ON THE CARRIAGE OF BLENDS OF BIOFUELS AND MARPOL ANNEX I CARGOES BY CONVENTIONAL BUNKER SHIPS (MEPC.1/Circ.917)

1. This circular serves to inform the shipping community that the International Maritime Organization's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), at its 83rd session¹, approved *Interim guidance on the carriage of blends of biofuels and MARPOL Annex I cargoes by conventional bunker ships*² (MEPC.1/Circ.917).
2. MEPC.1/Circ.917 sets out that conventional bunker ships may transport blends of not more than 30% by volume of biofuel (\leq B30), as long as all residues or tank washings are discharged ashore unless the oil discharge monitoring equipment (ODME)³ is approved for the biofuel blend(s) being shipped, pending further development of carriage requirements on biofuels for conventional bunker ships certified for carriage of oil fuels under MARPOL Annex I or the revision of the current carriage requirements as provided in the IBC Code and circular MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.17⁴.
3. The approved interim guidance had been implemented early by MPA since 7 March 2025, allowing Singapore-registered conventional bunker ships to transport blends of not more than 30% by volume of biofuel (\leq B30), consistent with MEPC.1/Circ.917. There is no requirement to seek MPA's separate approval.
4. Shipowners, ship managers, operators and masters of Singapore-registered conventional bunker ships are hereby reminded to comply with MEPC.1/Circ.917, and obtain approval from the competent Port State Authority before calling at a foreign port

¹ MEPC 83 was held from 7 to 11 April 2025.

² "Conventional bunker ship" refers to an oil tanker, as defined in regulation 1.5 of MARPOL Annex I that is engaged in the transport and delivery of fuel oil for use by ships.

³ *Revised guidelines and specifications for oil discharge monitoring and control systems for oil tankers (resolution MEPC.108(49), as amended by resolution MEPC.240(65))*

⁴ MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.17 – 2019 Guidelines for the Carriage of Blends of Biofuels and MARPOL Annex I Cargoes.

for operations with blends containing more than 25% but not more than 30% by volume of biofuel (>B25 to ≤B30) onboard.

5. For the use of marine biofuels above B30 or biofuels not listed in chapters 17 and 18 of the IBC Code or the circular MEPC.2³, as amended (Annex 11), bunker suppliers and bunker craft operators are required to seek approval from MPA's Standards & Investigation – Marine Fuels (SIMF) department prior to conducting pilots and/or delivery to shipowners, ship managers and operators. Pilots for up to B100 are on-going, and vessels can engage in these pilots to test the efficacy and procedures.

6. This circular supersedes Shipping Circular No. 1 of 2025.

7. Any queries relating to this circular should be directed to MPA Shipping Division via email at shipping@mpa.gov.sg.

8. Do subscribe to our Telegram channel – t.me/MPASingapore to receive the latest updates.



CHEAH AUN AUN
DIRECTOR OF MARINE
MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE

³ MEPC.2 circular is updated yearly in December. MEPC.2/Circ.30 was issued in December 2024.

4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT
LONDON SE1 7SR
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611 Fax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210

MEPC.1/Circ.917
12 May 2025

**INTERIM GUIDANCE ON THE CARRIAGE OF BLENDS OF BIOFUELS AND
MARPOL ANNEX I CARGOES BY CONVENTIONAL BUNKER SHIPS**

1 The Marine Environment Protection Committee, at its eighty-third session (7 to 11 April 2025), approved *Interim guidance on the carriage of blends of biofuels and MARPOL Annex I cargoes by conventional bunker ships* (Interim Guidance) set out in the annex.

2 The Interim Guidance does not intend to prejudge or delay the process of developing technically reliable and robust carriage requirements for bunker ships engaged in the carriage of blends of biofuels and MARPOL Annex I cargoes intended for use on board a ship and will be revoked immediately upon implementation of the comprehensive carriage requirements for such bunker ships.

3 Member Governments and international organizations are invited to provide information to the Organization on:

- .1 typical arrangements of conventional bunker ships and other similar ship types, subject to SOLAS and MARPOL; and
- .2 the requirements of the competent authorities for conventional bunker ships and other similar ship types operating within territorial waters, carrying blends of biofuels.

4 Member Governments and international organizations are also invited to bring the annexed Interim Guidance to the attention of Administrations, recognized organizations, port authorities, shipowners, ship operators and other parties concerned.

ANNEX

INTERIM GUIDANCE ON THE CARRIAGE OF BLENDS OF BIOFUELS AND MARPOL ANNEX I CARGOES BY CONVENTIONAL BUNKER SHIPS

1 The MEPC.2 circular on *Provisional categorization of liquid substances in accordance with MARPOL Annex II and the IBC Code* (updated every December¹) sets out, in its annex 11, the list of approved biofuels, as covered by the *2019 Guidelines for the carriage of blends of biofuels and MARPOL Annex I cargoes* (MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.17), and includes tert-Amyl ethyl ether, Ethyl alcohol, Fatty acid methyl esters (FAME) and Vegetable fatty acid distillates. MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.17 provides that biofuel blends containing more than 1% but less than 75% of a MARPOL Annex I cargo are subject to MARPOL Annex II, with carriage requirements as set out in chapter 17 of the IBC Code.

2 The *Guidelines for the carriage of energy-rich fuels and their blends* (MEPC.1/Circ.879) set out that energy-rich products and their blends may be carried in conventional bunker ships subject to MARPOL Annex I when containing 75% or more of the energy-rich fuels, which are of biological origin or originate from non-petroleum sources, e.g. algae, vegetable oils, gas-to-liquid (GTL) process and hydrotreated vegetable oils (HVO).

3 The unified interpretations to regulation 18.3 of MARPOL Annex VI (MEPC.1/Circ.795/Rev.9, section 15) provide, inter alia:

- .1 the interpretation that "a fuel oil which is a blend of not more than 30% by volume of biofuel or synthetic fuel" should meet the requirements of regulation 18.3.1 of MARPOL Annex VI, which covers blends of hydrocarbons derived from petroleum refining;
- .2 the definition of a biofuel as "a fuel oil which is derived from biomass and hence includes, but is not limited to, processed used cooking oils, fatty acid methyl esters (FAME) or fatty acid ethyl esters (FAEE), straight vegetable oils (SVO), hydrotreated vegetable oils (HVO), glycerol or other biomass to liquid (BTL) type products"; and
- .3 the application of NO_x requirements to biofuel, synthetic fuel and blends of these fuels.

4 Within the scope of this Interim Guidance, a "conventional bunker ship" refers to an oil tanker, as defined in regulation 1.5 of MARPOL Annex I, that is engaged in the transport and delivery of fuel oil for use by ships.

5 Pending further development of carriage requirements on biofuels for conventional bunker ships certified for carriage of oil fuels under MARPOL Annex I or the revision of the current carriage requirements as provided in the IBC Code and circular MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.17, conventional bunker ships may transport blends of not more than 30% by volume of biofuel, as long as all residues or tank washings are discharged ashore unless the oil discharge monitoring equipment (ODME)² is approved for the biofuel blend(s) being shipped.

¹ MEPC.2/Circ.30 was issued in December 2024.

² *Revised guidelines and specifications for oil discharge monitoring and control systems for oil tankers* (resolution MEPC.108(49), as amended by resolution MEPC.240(65)).

6 The international Oil Pollution Prevention certificate (IOPP certificate) issued to a conventional bunker ship carrying blends between 25% and 30% by volume of biofuel or synthetic fuel does not need to be modified.
