



# Marine Safety Flash

## A16-21 (15<sup>th</sup> June)

### Minor fuel spill during offshore transfer

#### Incident Overview

A Platform Supply Vessel was set up on location and ready to deliver fuel; the hose was connected at the Starboard mid-ships connection. Pre-bunkering check list was complete.

One AB was posted at port mid-ships manifold, one posted at starboard mid-ships manifold. The pump was started on a low rate in order to prove the line with the installation. Shortly after starting the pump a spray of fuel was noticed at the port aft fuel connection. Bunkering operations were immediately suspended, less than 1 litre of fuel is estimated to have escaped to sea.

#### Key Findings

The leak originated from the Port aft connection. This connection was not part of the vessels fixed pipework system, but a removable flexible hose connected to the port mid-ships manifold, leading aft to the port quarter. The hose was terminated with a dry break connection, which was capped at the time of the incident, the valve at the port mid-ships manifold was thought to be closed at the time of the incident.

For this spill to occur, the port mid-ships manifold valve and the dry-break connection had to be passing. After stopping the pumping operation, the AB's disconnected the flexible hose double checked the valve and replaced the cap on the mid-ships manifold. The fuel transfer was then completed without further incident.

The vessel, as with many PSV's has a common fuel system and as such when the fuel line is in use, the whole line is pressurised, not just the line to the working manifold. In short, all manifolds on a given system are under the same pressure as the working manifold.

#### Recommendations

- All connections (not just the ones in use) need to be checked prior to commencing bulk transfer operations.
- All valves should be correctly closed with appropriate caps in place and correctly fitted.
- Regular maintenance and inspections of manifold valves and connections are an important factor in preventing spills of this type.
- The flexible hose to be removed and replaced with fixed pipework, the manifold valve inspected and the dry-break connection replaced.
- It was recommended to the vessel owner that a gearbox/wheel assembly be fitted, in order to aid effective operation of the valve.
- The location of the manifold valve may have been a factor, its position, potentially making it difficult to access and effectively operate.