

## Detecting disappeared bunkers

At the present market rate, bunker cost is one of the largest operating expenses incurred in a TC voyage. With such high costs involved, it becomes imperative for the charterers to know the exact bunker quantity onboard at the time of supplying bunkers.

To prevent bunker misappropriation Transoil is able to offer 221B Surveys (commonly known as Bunker Detective Surveys) to ship operators. We can offer our services globally as we are exclusive member for Europe in the 'Bunker Detectives' network.

### 221B Surveys

221B or bunker detective surveys are carried out by our marine surveyors on behalf of the charterers to find concealed (hidden) bunker fuel onboard.

To find concealed fuel our qualified staff will go on board the vessel and 'get their hands dirty'. In order to prevent fuel losses 'Bunker Detective' experienced surveyors offer impartial, independent quantity measurement inspection services for marine fuels, issuing detailed bunker survey reports to confirm fuel delivery and report any bunker fuel shortages

The term is derived from a historic reference to the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes' London residence where he ran his consulting detective business - 221B Baker Street.

### How bunker fuel is concealed?

There are many ways to conceal fuel on a vessel – some of the examples are:

- Short bunker delivery
- Hidden compartments
- Use of 'magic pipes'
- Altered sounding pipe lengths
- Non-class approved and / or altered sounding tables
- Sounding tapes not properly calibrated
- Doctored fuel gauges and so on...

### What is a 'magic pipe'?

Magic pipe is a terminology used when finding concealed bunkers. If used properly – to an untrained eye – it can be hard to detect and thus making bunker fuel disappear just like 'magic'. These magic pipes are fabricated onboard by marine engineers and designed to fit tightly inside the actual sounding pipe. The bottom end of the magic pipe is closed and the pipe pushed through the fuel to the bottom of the tank. During sounding, the tank thus appears empty or gives false soundings.

Note 'magic pipe' is also the term used to bypass the OWS (Oily Water Separator) connection in order to dump oil overboard. Unlike the

use of magic pipe for bunker concealment, use of magic pipes to bypass the OWS is a criminal offense and heavy fines and penalties may be imposed and / or imprisonment.

### Cost / losses for the charterer

For example concealing just 10 mt. of MDO at \$ 900/mt. is \$ 9,000 and 20 mt. of IFO at \$ 650/mt. comes to \$ 13,000. That's \$ 22,000 in losses for the charterer.

This is a very small find. Normally a typical find would be in excess of 30 mt. and on a good day we have found in excess of 70 mt. with findings as large as 120 mt. That is over \$ 75,000 in losses. ▶



### About Transoil

Transoil is an independent marine consultancy company providing a broad range of transshipment services such as cargo surveying, superintendency services, loss control and STS services. Based in The Netherlands we operate world-wide for specialized assignments delivering the highest standards of integrity and expertise. We show a strong focus on value added services and operational efficiency. As a result our solutions benefit our clients directly with a proven return on investment.

**Transoil, experts in action!**

---

Transoil BV  
Trawlerkade 51-57  
1976 CB IJmuiden  
The Netherlands  
T 0031 255 541 104  
info@transoil.nl

