

PSC UPDATE 07-2014 / NOVEMBER

FUEL OIL QUICK-CLOSING VALVES, LEADING DETENTION GROUND BY USCG



In 2011 the United States Coast Guard (USCG) published a [Safety Alert](#) regarding the inspection of fuel oil quick-closing valves. The safety alert was issued after Port State Control (PSC) officers found that fuel oil tank quick closing valves had sometimes been blocked in an open position, or were poorly maintained so that they were not operating as designed when released in an emergency. It would appear that this is still an ongoing issue.

According to the [USCG 2013](#) annual report, the number of detentions in the United States has steadily decreased during the last three years, and the detention ratio for 2013 is down to 1,11%. Despite the decrease in the overall number of detentions, there has been an increase in the number of detentions related to environmental protection and safety related deficiencies for the period 2011-2013.

According to the USCG, the reason for an increased number of detentions related to safety equipment is because crews are intentionally disabling required safety equipment. An example of these types of deficiencies is blocked-open remote quick-closing fuel oil shutoff valves. Both during 2013 and so far in 2014 there has been an increase in the number of detainable deficiencies related to blocked quick-closing valves. If deficiencies related to quick-closing valves are found during an USCG inspection, these may lead

to detention of the vessel, for example if the quick-closing valves are kept blocked in an open position. It is very important that they are operated and maintained correctly so they are ready for use at all times.

The crew should ensure that:

- The quick-closing valve operating system is capable of remotely closing all valves as designed; some systems close valves sequentially and others simultaneously.
- There is a maintenance plan in place including technical manuals containing diagrams and information that describe the system components, required spare parts, operation, maintenance and repair.
- All engine department personnel can identify the location of each valve, the respective remote closure and how to close them locally and remotely in an emergency.

Another leading detainable deficiency by USCG in 2013 is related to Fixed Water-Based Fire Fighting Systems.

During port state control examinations, it was observed that fixed water based fire-fighting systems that protect periodically-unattended Category A machinery spaces were secured either by closing supply valves or by placing the system in a manual mode of operation. By doing so, the system's quick response capability is disabled, reducing the effectiveness of the system by not having it ready for immediate use when the machinery space is unattended. For more info, please refer to [USCG MSIB 41-13](#)

CONTACT

psc@dnvgl.com / portstatecontrol@dnvgl.com