

Bunker Stem **Detective Survey (BSDS)**

'Preventing Short Supplying of Bunkers'

About Bunker Detective:

Bunker Detective is an exclusive division of AVA Marine Group Inc.

A professional marine surveying and consultancy firm – founded in 2013 and led by Kaivan H. Chinoy. The Company provides a comprehensive range of specialist marine surveying, marine loss control & bunker surveying services to clients globally.

An **ISO 9001 / 17020** Company and an **IBIA** Corporate Member with offices in Singapore, Vancouver, Panama, Bunker Detective provides an impartial and independent quantity measurement inspection services for marine fuels, issuing detailed bunker survey reports to ascertain the exact fuel quantity onboard at the time of survey and to avert bunker fuel shortages and mal-practices. To learn more about our marine surveying capabilities, visit our website at bunkerdetective.com

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This short article explains the importance of measuring all nominated (receiving) as well as non-nominated (non-receiving) tanks on both the supply vessel (barge) and the receiving vessel (ship) and carrying out a **Bunker Stem Detective Survey (BSDS)** in order to establish the exact ROB onboard prior commencing any bunkering operations.

Most shipping companies will engage the services of an independent surveyor to protect their interest during stemming bunkers; however, how many companies actually give clear instructions to the attending surveyor to measure all non-nominated tanks? Or how many surveyors actually carry out the measurements diligently? There is simply no excuse for not doing so! And failing, leaves the operator of the vessel vulnerable to dubious practices suffering a significant short supply without even knowing it. The following case study will highlight one of many such issues quite prevalent in bunker stem operations.

Case Study:

During a recent routine bunkering operation in Singapore upon embarking the vessel our surveyor found the barge representative in Chief Engineer’s cabin behind closed door negotiating or rather making a ‘deal’ on the stem quantity to be supplied.

The official quantity to be stemmed was 740 mt and the vessel had an excess ROB of 52 mt (which the surveyor found undeclared during **BSDS** later but prior bunkering operations). The dubious plan as it unfolded was to ‘deliberate short supply’ the vessel in the tune of approximately 50 mt of IFO but on the bunker delivery note (BDN) full quantity would have been stated to have been received by the vessel and signed by the very Chief Engineer who is supposed to be protecting the charterer’s interest!

The barge rep told our surveyor to look the other way as this did not concern him. Failing to do so, the barge rep and the Ch. Eng tried to bribe the surveyor who made it very clear that if this goes on he will report them to the authorities. This mal-practice could be further explained:

Bunker ordered by the vessel operator	740.00	mt
Un-declared fuel onboard	52.00	mt
Plan to deliberate short supply the vessel (740 mt – 50mt)	690.00	mt
Quantity to be incorrectly declared on the BDN	740.00	mt
Losses for the Operator will be double		
• for under-declared fuel (\$310 x 50 mt)	-15,500.00	USD
• for the short-supply fuel (\$310 x 50 mt)	-15,500.00	USD
TOTAL LOSS:	-31,000.00	USD

This is not the first time we have come across this tactic of short-supplying as we see this often in major bunkering hubs such as Panama, Fujairah, Singapore etc. and all too often the operators would not even know that they have been short changed!

We therefore cannot stress the importance of carrying out a **BSDS** prior all bunkering operations as **BSDS** is an essential loss control tool – especially for operators with a large fleet under their management who can suffer a significant financial loss over time.
