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STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

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**2002 No. 28**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**The Sulphur Content of Liquid Fuels  
Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002**

*Made* - - - - *29th January 2002*

*Coming into operation* *11th March 2002*

The Department of the Environment, being a Department designated<sup>(1)</sup> for the purposes of section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972<sup>(2)</sup> in relation to the control of air pollution, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by section 2(2) of that Act, hereby makes the following Regulations—

**Citation and commencement**

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Sulphur Content of Liquid Fuels Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002 and shall come into operation on 11th March 2002.

**Interpretation**

2.—(1) In these Regulations—

- (a) “combustion plant” means any technical apparatus in which fuels are oxidized in order to use the heat generated;
- (b) “gas oil” means—
  - (i) any petroleum derived liquid fuel falling within CN code 2710 00 67 or 2710 00 68; or
  - (ii) any petroleum derived liquid fuel which, by reason of its distillation limits, falls within the category of middle distillates intended for use as fuel and of which at least 85 per cent by volume (including losses) distills at 350°C by the ASTM D86 method, but shall not include diesel fuels, as defined in Article 2(2) of Council Directive [98/70/EC](#) relating to the quality of petrol and diesel fuels<sup>(3)</sup> and fuels used in non-road mobile machinery and agricultural tractors;
- (c) “heavy fuel oil” means—

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(1) S.I.1988/785

(2) 1972 c. 68

(3) O.J. No. L350, 28.12.98, p. 58

- (i) any petroleum derived liquid fuel falling within CN code 2710 00 71 to 2710 00 78; or
  - (ii) any petroleum derived liquid fuel, other than gas oil or marine gas oil, which, by reason of its distillation limits, falls within the category of heavy oils intended for use as fuel and of which less than 65 per cent by volume (including losses) distills at 250°C by the ASTM D86 method or of which the distillation cannot be determined by that method;
  - (d) “marine gas oil” means fuel intended for marine use which is gas oil or which has a viscosity or density falling within the ranges of viscosity or density defined for marine distillates in Table I of ISO 8217 (1996)(4);
  - (e) “sulphur content of liquid fuels permit” has the meaning given in regulation 3(6)(b)(ii);
  - (f) “the 1997 Order” refers to “The Industrial Pollution Control (Northern Ireland) Order 1997”(5).
- (2) In paragraph (1)—
- (a) “ASTM method” means the methods laid down by the American Society for Testing and Materials in the 1976 edition of standard definitions and specifications for petroleum and lubricating products(6);
  - (b) the reference to a numbered CN code is a reference to the code set out in the Integrated Customs Tariff of the United Kingdom (2000 edition) as the CN code with that number(7).
- (3) These Regulations do not apply to—
- (a) the use of fuel, other than of marine gas oil, by seagoing ships;
  - (b) the use of marine gas oil by ships crossing a frontier between a third country and a Member State;
  - (c) the use of fuel intended for processing prior to final combustion; and
  - (d) the use of fuel to be processed in the refining industry.
- (4) Words used in these Regulations which are also used in Council Directive 1999/32/EC relating to a reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels(8) have the same meaning as in that Directive.
- (5) The Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954(9) shall apply to these Regulations as it applies to the Act of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

### **Maximum sulphur content of heavy fuel oil**

3.—(1) Subject to the following provisions of this regulation, any person who, on or after 1st January 2003, uses heavy fuel oil with a sulphur content exceeding 1 per cent by mass shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the use of heavy fuel oil in a new large combustion plant which is operated in accordance with a condition in a permit which contains emission limit values for sulphur dioxide which are at least as stringent as those set out for such plant in Annex IV to Council Directive 88/609/EEC(10).

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(4) ISO 8217 (1996) is described in the British Standard entitled “Specification for Petroleum Fuels for marine oil engines and boilers”, published under the numbers BS MA1 00 and ISO 8217:1996, which came into effect on 15th August 1996

(5) S.I. 1997/2777 (N.I. 18)

(6) The ASTM method is described in the 1999 Annual Book of ASTM Standards: Section 5—Petroleum Products, Lubricants and Fossil Fuels, published by the American Society for Testing and Materials, November 1999

(7) The Integrated Customs Tariff of the United Kingdom (2000 edition) is published by HMSO (ISBN 0117818054)

(8) O.J. No. L121, 11.5.99, p. 13

(9) 1954 c. 33 (N.I.)

(10) O.J. No. L336, 7.12.88, p. 1

(3) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the use of heavy fuel oil in a combustion plant which is not a new large combustion plant and which is operated in accordance with a condition in a permit which prohibits the emissions of sulphur dioxide from the plant exceeding 1,700 mg/Nm<sup>3</sup> at an oxygen content in the flue gas of 3 per cent by volume on a dry basis.

(4) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the use of heavy fuel oil in a combustion plant which—

- (a) is not a new large combustion plant;
- (b) is used for combustion in a refinery with other combustion plant; and
- (c) is operated in accordance with a condition in a permit which provides that the plant may only be operated if (irrespective of the type of fuel or fuel combination used) the monthly average of emissions of sulphur dioxide averaged over all of the plant in the refinery (excluding new large combustion plant) does not exceed 1,700 mg/Nm<sup>3</sup> at an oxygen content in the flue gas of 3 per cent by volume on a dry basis.

(5) An authority which grants a permit referred to in paragraphs (2) to (4) shall ensure that the appropriate monitoring of emissions of sulphur dioxide is carried out for the purpose of checking compliance with the conditions referred to in those paragraphs.

(6) In this regulation—

- (a) “new large combustion plant” means new plant, within the meaning of Article 2(9) of Directive [88/609/EEC](#), which falls within the scope of that Directive;
- (b) “permit” means, in relation to a combustion plant—
  - (i) an authorisation under Article 6 of the 1997 Order, if the operation of the plant requires such an authorisation;
  - (ii) in any other case, a permit granted for the purpose of these Regulations (a “sulphur content of liquid fuels permit”).

(7) Schedule 1 shall have effect in relation to applications for, the grant of, and other matters relating to, sulphur content of liquid fuels permits.

### **Maximum sulphur content in gas oil**

4.—(1) Any person who, on or after 11th March 2002 and before 1st January 2008, uses gas oil or marine gas oil with a sulphur content exceeding 0.2 per cent by mass shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.

(2) Any person who, on or after 1st January 2008, uses gas oil or marine gas oil with a sulphur content exceeding 0.1 per cent by mass shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.

### **Sampling and analysis**

5.—(1) The Department shall take all necessary measures to ensure that sampling is carried out of heavy fuel oil and gas oil used in Northern Ireland to check that the use of the fuel complies with regulations 3(1) and 4(1) and 4(2).

(2) Sampling under paragraph (1) shall begin—

- (a) for the purpose of checking for compliance with regulation 3(1), by 1st July 2003;
- (b) for the purpose of checking for compliance with regulation 4(1), by 11th March 2002;
- (c) for the purpose of checking for compliance with regulation 4(2), by 1st July 2008.

(3) Sampling under paragraph (1) shall be carried out with sufficient frequency and in such a way that the samples are representative of the fuel examined.

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(4) Schedule 2 shall apply for the purpose of determining the sulphur content of fuel sampled under paragraph (1).

**Revocation**

6. The Marketing of Gas Oil (Sulphur Content) Regulations 1994<sup>(11)</sup> are hereby revoked in so far as they extend to Northern Ireland.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of the Environment on 29th January 2002.

L.S.

*Sam Foster*  
Minister of the Environment

## SCHEDULE 1

Regulation 3

### **Sulphur content of liquid fuels permits**

1. An operator of a combustion plant who wishes to rely on the exemption in regulation 3(3) or (4) may apply to the enforcing authority for a sulphur content of liquid fuels permit if the operation of the plant does not require an authorisation under the 1997 Order.

2. An application under paragraph 1 shall be in writing, shall be accompanied by any fee prescribed in respect of the application under Article 8 of the 1997 Order and shall contain the following information—

- (a) the name of the applicant, his telephone number and address (including post code) and, if different, any address to which correspondence relating to the application should be sent;
- (b) the address of the site of the combustion plant, the rated thermal input of the plant (in megawatts) and the fuel used in the plant; and
- (c) the condition which the applicant wishes to be included in the permit, being a condition which would satisfy the requirements of regulation 3(3) or (4).

3. An application under paragraph 1 may be withdrawn at any time before it is determined.

4. An enforcing authority which receives a duly made application under paragraph 1 shall grant a sulphur content of liquid fuels permit subject to the condition identified in the application.

5.—(1) A sulphur content of liquid fuels permit may be transferred by the holder of the permit to a person who proposes to operate the combustion plant in the holder's place.

(2) Where a permit is transferred under this paragraph the person to whom it is transferred shall notify the enforcing authority which granted the permit in writing of that fact not later than the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the date of the transfer.

6.—(1) A sulphur content of liquid fuels permit may be surrendered by the holder of the permit by serving written notice of the surrender on the enforcing authority which granted the permit.

(2) Where a surrender is notified under this paragraph the permit shall cease to have effect on the date specified in the notification.

7. In this Schedule “enforcing authority” means the chief inspector by which, under Articles 17-19 of the 1997 Order, the functions conferred or imposed by the Order otherwise than on the Department, are for the time being exercisable.

8. Article 8 of the 1997 Order shall apply for the purpose of prescribing a fee payable in respect of an application for a sulphur content of liquid fuels permit as it applies for the purpose of prescribing a fee payable in respect of an application for an authorisation granted under Article 6 of that Order.

## SCHEDULE 2

Regulation 5(4)

### **Technical requirements for analysis of samples**

1. The reference method adopted for determining the sulphur content of fuels sampled pursuant to regulation 5 shall be that defined by—

- (a) ISO method 8754 (1992) and PrEN ISO 14596 for heavy fuel oil and marine gas oil(12);

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(12) ISO method 8754 (1992) is described in the British Standard entitled “Petroleum Products—Determination of Sulphur Content—Energy—dispersive X-ray fluorescence methods”, published under the numbers BS EN ISO 8754:1995 and ISO 8754:1992, which came into effect on 31st July 1995. PrEN ISO 14596 is described in the British Standard entitled “Petroleum Products—

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- (b) EN method 4260 (1987), ISO 8754 (1992) and PrEN ISO 14596 for gas oil(13).
2. The arbitration method shall be PrEN ISO 14596.
3. The statistical interpretation of the verification of the sulphur content of the gas oils used shall be carried out in accordance with ISO standard 4259 (1992)(14).

### EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Regulations.)*

These Regulations implement Council Directive 1999/32/EC relating to the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels.

The Regulations—

- (a) make it an offence to use heavy fuel oil on or after 1st January 2003 with a sulphur content exceeding 1 per cent, subject to certain exceptions (regulation 3);
- (b) make it an offence to use gas oil or marine gas oil on or after 11th March 2002 with a sulphur content exceeding 0.2 per cent by mass and to use such oil on or after 1st January 2008 with a sulphur content exceeding 0.1 per cent by mass (regulation 4);
- (c) require the Department to check by sampling that the sulphur content of fuels used complies with these requirements (regulation 5);
- (d) revoke the Marketing of Gas Oil (Sulphur Content) Regulations 1994 in so far as they extend to Northern Ireland, which are superseded by these Regulations;
- (e) provide for the granting of permits to enable an operator of a combustion plant who would not otherwise require a permit to operate the plant to apply for a permit so that he can take advantage of the exemptions to the restriction on the use of heavy fuel oil (Schedule 1); and
- (f) set out technical requirements for the analysis of samples taken under regulation 5 (Schedule 2).

Copies of the British Standards publications referred to in these Regulations may be obtained from any of the outlets operated by the British Standards Institution, or by post from the British Standards Institution at Standards House, 389 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL. *The Integrated Customs Tariff of the United Kingdom*, which sets out the CN codes used in the definitions of “gas oil” and “heavy fuel oil”, are published by HMSO and available from HMSO Bookshops. The 1999 Annual Book of ASTM Standards is available from the American Society for Testing and Materials, 100 Barr Harbor Drive, West Conshohocken, PA 19428, USA.

Copies of the Directive can be obtained from the Stationery Office Bookshop, 16 Arthur Street, Belfast, BT1 4GD.

Determination of Sulphur Content—Wavelength—dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectrometry”, published under the numbers BS EN ISO 14596:1998 and ISO 14596:1998, which came into effect on 15th December 1998.

- (13) EN method 4260 (1987) is described in the British Standard entitled “Petroleum Products and Hydrocarbons—Determination of Sulphur Content—Wickbold combustion method” published under the numbers BS EN 24260:1994 and ISO 4260:1987, which came into effect on 30th September 1994.
- (14) Described in the British Standard entitled “Petroleum Products—Determination and Application of precision data in relation to methods of test”, published under the numbers BS EN ISO 4259:1996 and ISO 4259:1992, which came into effect on 15th February 1996.

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