

Tradewinds 02 March 2012

Rising number of emission control areas heralds changeover from residual fuel to distillates

However Ian Adams who heads IMA Marine Ltd, an independent consultancy specialising in bunkers and training reckons at least the supply of suitable fuel will be there because the US coastal trade relies on low sulphur distillates, "most of the US coastal fleet relies on distillates so it is only the international fleet that may experience some minor problems of availability" he said.

He suggests that owners need to prepare for an increasing number of ECA's. "Obviously if you are operating a vessel which is going to be entering an area that has restrictions on the sulphur content you will need to lay your fuel management with care. Training the ship's crew is also advisable. They need to understand how they need to comply and more importantly prove that they have complied," he says.

Adams believes that the signs are that the bunker market will become stretched "This [global limit] will have massive implications for governments who will see the price of domestic heating oil increase dramatically. OCIMF estimated that Europe was short by 22 million tons of middle distillate annually. There does appear to be an issue with availability."