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South Korea's Go Slow and ECA Regulations

In December 2019, the South Korean Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) began a Vessel Speed Reduction (VSR) program to reduce the emission of particulates from vessels.

The program requires shipowners to enter ports at a speed of 12 knots for container ships and car-carriers, 10 knots for other ship types. The VSR area applies from approximately 20 nautical miles from a specific lighthouse in each port. VSR Program Sea Areas applies to the five major Korean seaports of Busan, Ulsan, Yeosu, Gwangyang and Incheon and compliant shipowners may have their port fees reduced if they have voluntarily reduced their speeds.

The MOF also announced new ECA regions where vessels will be required to use compliant fuel with a maximum sulphur content of 0.10%. Clarification received from the Korea Shipowners' Association (KSA) confirms that the use of Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (EGCS), including open-loop EGCS, are permitted within the new ECAs.

The ECAs will be implemented in the following 2 stages:

1. From 1st September 2020, all vessels either at berth or at anchor in the ports of Busan, Incheon, Ulsan, Yeosu, Gwangyang (including Hadong port) and Pyeongtaek-Dangjin will be required to burn fuel with a maximum sulphur content of 0.10%. Vessels will be required to changeover to compliant fuel within 1 hour after completing anchoring or mooring and will have to continue burning compliant fuel up to 1 hour before completion of heaving in anchor or de-berthing.
2. From 1st January 2022, all vessels will be required to use compliant fuel with a maximum Sulphur content of 0.10% while they are inside the designated new ECAs of Busan, Incheon, Ulsan, Yeosu, Gwangyang (including Hadong port) and Pyeongtaek-Dangjin

Information including the extent of the new ECAs can be found in the technical information document from the Korean Register.

Full details of the Republic of Korea - Vessel Speed Reduction Program can be found on their website.

Further information can be obtained from the Club's Loss Prevention Department.