



## Fuel shortages raise concerns over fuel tank levels on car carriers

The conflict in the Middle East and resulting fuel shortages have led to questions within the shipping industry about whether vehicles transported on car carriers can be shipped with larger amounts of fuel in the tank to meet increasing demand in destination markets.

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At Gard, we have received inquiries on this issue from car carrier operators and would like to share the following guidance from a safety and insurance perspective:

While [SOLAS](#) regulations and the [IMDG Code](#) do not explicitly set a maximum fuel limit for vehicles transported by sea on dedicated vehicle decks, industry practice has traditionally been to load vehicles with only the minimal fuel necessary for loading and discharging operations.

So, while technically "permissible" under a literal reading of SOLAS and IMDG Code for vessels that meet the SOLAS II.-2/Reg.20 regulations, transporting vehicles with full fuel tanks represents a significant departure from safe maritime practices. Such a shift from the industry standard of minimal fuel introduces severe fire safety hazards. In the event of a vehicle fire, larger fuel volumes may intensify the fire and increase the likelihood of fuel spreading across decks, creating more challenging firefighting conditions.

Therefore, we recommend following the established minimal-fuel protocols to ensure the safety of the vessel and crew. Class and Flag should be approached for guidance.

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