

## **Carriage of hot air balloons with propane and their related equipment DFDS Seaways English Channel ferries**

DFDS Seaways (formally Norfolkline) procedures have always permitted tourist vehicles to carry up to 47kg of Propane in any number of cylinders but historically this has not included hot air balloons. Ballooning cylinders have been required to be purged and accompanied with a purging certificate.

Following a recent shipment of our balloon with purged cylinders to France and subsequently speaking with myself (as a self-appointed representative for the British Balloon and Airship Club in consultation with Chris Dunkley) and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), the excellent Matthew Jackson *Dangerous Goods Safety Advisor - DFDS English Channel* has extended this exemption to include tourist vehicles carrying or towing hot air balloon equipment for private use. *You may wish to print and keep a copy of the exemption letter in your flight bag, should you need to refer to its content during check-in stage at port.*

This exemption is granted on all of DFDS Seaways English Channel routes Dover<>Dunkerque and Dover<>Calais. The cylinders are not required to be purged before travel and are permitted to be transported with residual gas within the cylinder. They are aware that the most usual cylinders carried are 20kg and 30kg and that the cylinders have gauges that register percentage. The gas supply should be shut off at the cylinders and all cylinders should be adequately secured against movement of the ship, away from sources of ignition and heat.

With immediate effect, on the condition that they are used in connection with the operation & safety of the hot air balloon we are now permitted to carry the following;

- Up to a maximum 47kg of a class 2.1 flammable gas (usually propane or butane and excluding the weight of the gas receptacle) in any number of cylinders
- A small cylinder of class 2.2 non-flammable gas (helium used for weather balloons so they can assess the wind conditions before launch)
- A small petrol can of fuel for the use in a fan to inflate the balloon envelope (permitted for use in essential equipment)
- Fire extinguishers for use in the operation of the balloon

DFDS are aware that all ballooning equipment carried conform to very strict safety standards as they come under the CAA aviation regulations as aircraft and that they will see an increase of the number of hot air balloons being transported carrying gas.

The MCA Marine Guidance Notice (MGN 340) exemption states that the shipping operator should be "informed at the time of booking". DFDS have advised this is hardly ever done currently by caravans etc, so as long as the customer informs DFDS at the check-in stage then the loading team can inform the vessel so they are aware (in case of an incident onboard). A copy of this Marine Guidance Notice can be obtained from the MCA website at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/mgn340.pdf>

If the amount of gas needed to be transported exceeds the exemption limit of 47kg then you will need to comply fully with the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code and provide DFDS with a dangerous goods declaration. More information on these regulations and DFDS Seaways processes can be obtained by calling them on +44 (0)1304 218400 or emailing [dover.freightbookings@dfds.com](mailto:dover.freightbookings@dfds.com)

If you are at Dover, Dunkerque or Calais for a DFDS sailing and experience a problem, remain calm and politely show them the letter of agreement. If you are still experiencing problems, ask them to contact DFDS Seaways Duty Operations Manager on +44 (0)1304 218451 who should be able to clear up any misunderstandings. If all else fails call Matthew Jackson (Dangerous Goods Safety Advisor - DFDS English Channel) on +44 (0)7833 504 316. *Please do not use this contact directly unless you really need to as last resort.* As with all exceptions, this could be withdrawn should anyone abuse it by carrying more than 47kg of gas or fails to advise they are carrying gas at the check-in stage and this is subsequently discovered. Don't forget though that despite this concession the Captain's decision is always final.

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