



## Frequently asked questions – fuel quality compliance monitoring and enforcement

### 1. How rampant is the problem of fuel contamination in the country?

- i. ZERA conducts regular fuel quality monitoring across the country all the time to ensure fuel sold at retail sites meets national fuel quality standards. The convicted retail sites published constitute 1.1% of the licensed fuel retail sites. However, ZERA takes a zero tolerance to fuel quality contamination and adulteration and will take stern action against offenders in the interest of consumers.

### 2. On the list majority is in Harare, is the problem limited in Harare or?

- i. The problem is not limited to Harare alone. The list published shows companies caught and prosecuted so far between January and June 2024 country wide covering Quarter 1 and 2 of the year. Bulawayo, Mutare, Masvingo, Ruwa, and Marondera each had sites prosecuted in the period. Harare has more than 50% of the total fuel retail sites in the country and this also shows in the statistics of convictions.
- ii. ZERA shall be publishing the lists of convicted retail sites country wide at the end of Quarter 3 in September 2024 upon finalization of their cases.

### 3. What are your plans to curb the problem?

- i. ZERA is sharpening enforcement and regulatory tools by initiating, developing and reviewing fuel quality standards and regulations to make punishments more deterrent.
- ii. ZERA is increasing its monitoring and enforcement capacity by establishing and adequately manning regional offices to increase frequency of random testing and responsiveness to complaints.
- iii. ZERA is working closely with ZRP to enforce fuel quality regulations through site closures and arrests of operators.

### 4. What prompted the intensified fuel quality monitoring and testing, and what specific measures are being taken?

ZERA has always conducted fuel quality monitoring in the market with a zero tolerance to fuel contamination and adulteration. The naming of those service stations caught with contaminated fuel is meant to raise consumer awareness and encourage service stations to comply with set fuel quality standards and specifications.



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**5. Can you provide more details on the sanctions imposed on the operators listed for fuel quality offenses?**

The list given contains sufficient detail as it is, but you may also want to know that the listed sites have been;

- i. Convicted and paid fines and are now recorded as first offenders.
- ii. Listed operators have been given final warnings against repeating similar offences and they risk having their licenses cancelled if they repeat similar offences.

**6. How much is the fine?**

- Those found guilty of fuel quality offences are liable to pay a fine up to level 9 or imprisonment for a period not exceeding 5 years or both such fine and such imprisonment.
- If they are a repeat offender their license will be cancelled by ZERA.

**7. For motorists who unknowingly purchase substandard fuel, how can they be protected?**

- i. They must have proof that they purchased the fuel from the particular site.
- ii. They must report to the management of the site concerned immediately.
- iii. They must report to ZERA immediately even if the site owners promise to compensate them. This will ensure ZERA takes samples of the affected fuel immediately for testing.
- iv. They can request from ZERA for a laboratory test report of the tested fuel and can sue for damages or loss.

**8. How will ZERA ensure transparency and public awareness about fuel quality issues and sanctions?**

- i. Complainants are free to witness fuel quality testing by ZERA on site after reporting.
- ii. ZERA gives the test report to complainant upon request.
- iii. Complainants can also ask for independent tests if they so wish.
- iv. ZERA conducts service station standards training and awareness for service stations staff.
- v. The Authority also conducts nationwide stakeholder engagement on energy issues in general and fuel quality standards in particular.

**9. What are the long-term plans to prevent fuel quality violations and ensure compliance among operators?**

- i. ZERA is currently reviewing the Petroleum Act to provide for stiffer penalties and the licensing of transportation and storage facilities for petroleum products.



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**10. Can you provide examples of fuel quality violations and their impact on vehicles and the environment?**

- i. Water contamination-
  - a. Damages vehicle engine and fuel system components
  - b. Affects engine performance.
- ii. Adulteration –
  - a. Damage to engine
  - b. Loss of power and high fuel consumption
  - c. Toxic emissions to the environment

**11. How does ZERA collaborate with other stakeholders, such as law enforcement and fuel suppliers, to address fuel quality issues?**

In cases of fuel contamination, ZERA works with key stakeholders as follows;

- i. Obtains fuel purchase and supply document from alleged suppliers of the fuel.
- ii. Inspects licenses for everyone in the supply chain of the problem fuel.
- iii. With the help of ZRP conducts thorough investigations of any suspicious activities or conduct in the fuel supply chain.
- iv. Works with ZIMRA to authenticate fuel supply documents.
- v. Works with SAZ to conduct verification tests of suspicious samples.
- vi. Participates in SADC Regional Energy Regulators Association (RERA) Inter-laboratory Proficiency Tests for peer review and validation of the competence of ZERA's laboratory to conduct fuel quality testing.

**12. What advise can ZERA give to motorists to protect themselves against fuelling with contaminated fuel?**

- i. Don't be misled by cheap fuel prices, prices that are too low indicate one of two things, that the procurement was not regular, or the product quality was tampered with. Be warned.
- ii. Don't fuel at retail sites that operate in obscure places or that are not licensed. Such operators often don't care about fuel quality. In cases of doubt ask for their license and you may need to confirm their license status with ZERA.
- iii. Motorists to fuel from standard sites that are licensed and well branded and graded by ZERA to **minimize** risk of taking contaminated product.
- iv. Motorists to try and be loyal to a particular fuel retail site or fuel company for ease of monitoring any changes in vehicle performance caused by fuel quality changes if this happens.
- v. To report timeously any fuel quality suspicions to ZERA for prompt investigations.
- vi. To maintain and service your vehicle to get the best performance out of it and to enable you to quickly notice any changes in performance after taking suspicious fuel.



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