

New coatings ruling is a bonus for paint firms

Minimum 15-year guarantee for all ratings used in ballast tanks for all newly built ships

All ships built from the beginning of this year have to have a suitable coating in their ballast tanks that will last a minimum of 15 years.

The rules, according to the performance standard for protective coatings, resolutions of the International Maritime Organization, provides technical requirements for tanks in all ballast tanks of all new ships of greater than 500 gt.

In addition, double-side skins are arranged in bulk carriers of 150 m length and above came into full effect from July 1 last year. Any vessel of a keel laid this year will have to have the tanks properly coated. Although the ruling highlights the

need to coat ballast tanks, owners and operators need to be aware that the rule also covers ladders, guard rails and other permanent means of access to the tank spaces. The new vessel should be delivered with a coating technical file that has been approved by its classification society.

These rulings have been a bonanza for the industry's major coating manufacturers such as Hempel, International Paint and Iotun, which have already adapted their hull coating products following the use of tin in the paint.

US-based Advanced Polymer Coatings has recently revealed its latest tank coating. It is trying to get product and oil tankers to cover their cargo tanks with Marineline X, the latest from its Marineline 784 brand name more often used in chemical tankers.

APC chairman Donald Keehan said the company decided to follow on from its success in the chemical trades and has spent several years developing its new solution for the tanker market.

"The result is a coating that offers much better performance and versatility for product and oil tankers operators than conventional phenol epoxy or zinc silicate linings which have limitations," he said adding the key was to provide a product that can out perform in quality and cost.

The company claims it needs only two coatings, instead of the three needed for phenol epoxy, and by giving a smoother finish makes for easier and quicker tank cleaning.

"Compare switching from dirty to clean production a 45,000 dwt product tanker with 20 cargo tanks," said Mr Keehan. "Cleaning a phenol epoxy coating takes eight days, cleaning a Marineline X coating takes only four and requires a smaller amount of gas oil. The labour and material savings can be up to €80,000 [\$117,500] per cleaning."

APC also claims its coating is more durable and resistant to corrosion, especially from the creation of the acidified moisture that often develops due to the use of inert gas in the cargo tanks.