Statutory alert: Design, testing and location of devices to prevent the passage of flame into cargo tanks in tankers

Applicability: Builders, owners and managers of tankers carrying IBC Code Chapter 17 and 18 products

New requirements for the design, testing and location of devices to prevent the passage of flame into cargo tanks in tankers will come into force on January 1, 2013.

These apply to both new and existing tankers and will require that devices are tested to ensure that the Maximum Experimental Safe Gap (MESG) value is appropriate for products certified to be carried under the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk (IBC Code), Chapter 17.

The requirements apply only to those tankers carrying IBC Code Chapter 17 and 18 products, i.e., those issued with a Certificate of Fitness for the Carriage of Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk or an International Pollution Prevention Certificate for the Carriage of Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk.

Requirements for new tankers

New tankers constructed (having their keel laid) on or after January 1, 2013, carrying crude oil, petroleum products and flammable chemicals, will be required to have compliant equipment such as high-velocity pressure/vacuum valves and flame arresters fitted to the vessel from their date of delivery.

Requirements for existing tankers

Existing tankers constructed before January 1, 2013, carrying IBC Code Chapter 17 and 18 products, will be required to comply no later than the first scheduled dry-docking on or after January 1, 2013.

What happens if devices cannot be shown to be compliant?

If it cannot be shown that devices to prevent flame entering cargo tanks are compliant, only those bulk liquid cargoes with an MESG value of 0.9mm or greater, effectively Apparatus Group IIA, will be permitted to be loaded in the affected tanks. The cargo list attached to the Certificate of Fitness for the Carriage of Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk or the International Pollution Prevention Certificate for the Carriage of Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk will be amended to exclude any bulk liquid cargoes requiring a higher Apparatus Group.

The Summary of Requirements, issued with every Certificate of Fitness for the Carriage of Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk or International Pollution Prevention Certificate for the Carriage of Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk summarises the carriage requirements for the cargoes appended to the Certificate, including the Apparatus Group. Comparison between this document and the certification relating to the pressure/vacuum valves and flame arresters fitted to the vessel will indicate whether the Apparatus Group for the devices is sufficient for the cargoes carried. Owners and managers are encouraged to review these documents as soon as possible and to contact the manufacturer of their devices if they believe they are not certified for the products they carry.

Classification societies will conduct inspections as part of Safety Construction, Chemical Code and Classification surveys.

* The new requirements are contained in IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ.1324 -Revised Standards for the Design, Testing and Location of Devices to Prevent the Passage of Flame into Cargo Tanks in Tankers. This was approved at the 86th Session of the Martine Safety Committee, and amends MSC/Circ.677.

For further information, contact your local Lloyd’s Register Group office or:

paul.lam@lr.org
+44 (0)20 7423 2673