



MARINE COATINGS

Navigating Domestic and International Regulations

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The marine-coatings market presents some of the most interesting and complex technology, application, and distribution issues of the coatings industry. The global nature of much of the industry is exemplified not only in the movement of ships throughout the world, but also in the movement of the center of large shipbuilding over the decades: from the United States and Great Britain, to Japan, to Korea, and now China is looming on the horizon as the next center.

In addition to this international element, there is strong domestic demand in the U.S. for pleasure and recreational craft as well as harbor coastal and commercial fishing craft.

The substrates involved also present unique demands: antifouling coatings for hulls, nonskid coatings for walkways, and high-performance protective coatings designed to resist aggressive cargo such as chemicals and crude oil.

Additionally, few—if any—other coatings have had such a history of having to meet rigorous

standards imposed by government, international bodies, and independent classification societies certifying them fit for use for ship owners and the like. The unique nature of the industry is exemplified by the fact that no other coating is subject to standards set by a UN agency like protective marine coatings through the action and authorities of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

This article reviews the global nature of the standard-selling processes affecting marine coatings and the role played by organizations working on behalf of the marine coatings industry—the American Coatings Association and a body co-founded by ACA, the International Paint and Printing Ink Council (IPPIC). As will be demonstrated, the multifaceted nature of these processes requires constant attention across the world and simultaneously close monitoring of domestic processes as well.

Also, the processes are interactive. A standard or methodology established in one country or region can quickly and easily migrate to others.

In fact, an important strategy of global coatings product managers is to facilitate migration of reasonable rules and methodologies. The goal is to achieve a global uniformity that avoids having to maintain several different formulations and test methods for any given coating.

Note: Many of the topics addressed here will be more fully discussed at the ACA's 2010 International Marine and Offshore Coatings Conference that will be held in Virginia Beach, VA, May 19–21, 2010. (See related article on page 11.)