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An established supplier can be insurance against a non-compliant ballast water treatment system

Recent clarifications of U.S. Coast Guard policy show that care is needed when choosing a ballast water treatment system. For long-term compliance, the choice of supplier can be as important as the choice of the system itself.

Selecting the right supplier is an important part of any major equipment investment. But it has special significance in the marine industry, where global operations and long periods away from port make access to support and spare parts more critical. It becomes even more important in a new application like ballast water treatment, where so many suppliers and ballast water treatment systems have little practical experience at sea.

This fact was highlighted in a recent blog post from the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). The September 22nd post, which outlines the requirements for retaining type approval when a manufacturer goes out of business, suggests that choosing a less established supplier may have serious implications.

No type approval without approved parts

In its blog, the USCG writes that a type approval certificate must be updated if the system manufacturer changes hands. In addition, it makes clear that a ballast water treatment system cannot be operated, maintained or repaired with parts that are not included in its type approval.

In other words, if the original equipment manufacturer ceases to exist, a ballast water treatment system is at serious risk. If no other manufacturer buys the technology and updates the type approval certificate within five years, the type approval will expire and there will be no possibility for new parts that can keep existing systems in compliance.

Supplier knowledge an important asset

Naturally, the issue extends beyond the availability of spares. While type-approved spare parts for a defunct system could perhaps be scavenged from a scrapped vessel, the lack of access to qualified support may be equally problematic. When a supplier disappears, the knowledge of how to work with the system effectively may disappear as well.

"Supplier knowledge becomes increasingly important as customers begin to understand the criteria for certification and upholding compliance," says Anders Lindmark, Head of Alfa Laval PureBallast. "We receive many questions that go beyond the PureBallast technology itself, in part because of our unmatched experience with the operation of ballast water treatment systems and our practical know-how from hundreds of retrofit projects. We also have dedicated resources who dig into the regulatory aspects of ballast water treatment. Customers turn to us for answers, and our responsibility is to support them with answers that are complete."

Asking the right questions

In light of USCG policy, there are strong arguments for seeking out experience. Even among established suppliers, however, there can be key differences that impact compliance – or the ease of acquiring, installing and servicing a ballast water treatment system. As an aid in decision-making, many of these issues are highlighted in this downloadable checklist: http://www.alfalaval.com/globalassets/documents/microsites/pureballast/pdf/Alfa_Laval_PureBallast_Chapter_extract_Selection.pdf

The checklist is taken from "Making sense of ballast water management", a comprehensive guide that explores regulations, technologies, systems and more. The full guide is available from Alfa Laval at the following link: <http://www.alfalaval.com/pureballast/knowledge/>

To learn more about Alfa Laval PureBallast 3.1 and Alfa Laval's approach to ballast water treatment, visit www.alfalaval.com/pureballast

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Editor's notes

About Alfa Laval PureBallast

PureBallast, which was the first commercially available ballast water treatment system, is a chemical-free system sold and serviced by Alfa Laval. A vital component of the system is the Enhanced UV Reactor, which was developed jointly by Alfa Laval and Wallenius Water based on Wallenius Water Technology.

About Alfa Laval

Alfa Laval is a leading global provider of specialized products and engineering solutions based on its key technologies of heat transfer, separation and fluid handling.

The company's equipment, systems and services are dedicated to assisting customers in optimizing the performance of their processes. The solutions help them to heat, cool, separate and transport products in industries that produce food and beverages, chemicals and petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, starch, sugar and ethanol.

Alfa Laval's products are also used in power plants, aboard ships, oil and gas exploration, in the mechanical engineering industry, in the mining industry and for wastewater treatment, as well as for comfort climate and refrigeration applications.

Alfa Laval's worldwide organization works closely with customers in nearly 100 countries to help them stay ahead in the global arena. Alfa Laval's worldwide organization works closely with customers in nearly 100 countries to help them stay ahead in the global arena. Alfa Laval is listed on Nasdaq OMX, and, in 2016, posted annual sales of about SEK 35.6 billion (approx. 3.77 billion Euros). The company has about 17 000 employees.

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