

“Common sense” approach to ISO 8217 fuel standard, FOBAS

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Marine fuel testing and consultancy service, Lloyd’s Register’s FOBAS services, has advised that ship owners take a “common sense” approach towards the adoption of the new ISO 8217:2010 specification.



The revised ISO 8217:2010 represents a substantial advance over the previous 2005 standard and has prompted widespread debate within the shipping industry and the fuel supply community. A number of changes that have been incorporated into the new standard will promote the safe use of marine residual fuels and distillates recognising the fact that the industry is entering into a new realm of multi blend fuels driven by ever increasing environmental regulation. Furthermore users are provided with added protection against the supply of poor quality fuels.

“FOBAS’s experience of the last revision in 2005 was that the uptake of that edition was very slow with less than 50 percent of FOBAS’s clients adopting the standard within a year of release. It took nearly two years before the majority of FOBAS clients had adopted the standard. Given the comparatively further reaching changes in the 2010 edition it may well be that uptake could potentially be slower this time around,” said Douglas Raitt, Global FOBAS Manager

“The ISO 8217 standard is a commercial contractual specification as opposed to a legally enforced standard. It remains to be seen how much of the fuel that will be supplied through the new specification will be readily available after the release of the new standard.

“There may be issues in the short term as the entire marine fuel supply chain will have to adopt the new standard in their contractual terms of sale at various points in the custody chain. Furthermore it may take a while before ship operators/charterers en masse buy fuels based on the new standard as it depends on what charter party bunker fuel clauses stipulate.”

Mr Raitt said regardless of the rate of adoption of the forthcoming 2010 standard, a variety of tests such as lubricity and oxidation stability for distillates and H₂S for both residual and distillate fuels will be introduced into fuel testing requirements by the new standard. These tests are designed to increase the boundaries of quality control by suppliers and provide controls on characteristics that may need to be examined in the event of any operational issues or suspected concerns from a particular port.