

SUPERVISION AT THE SHIPYARD

The Shipowner should have his own supervision team at the yard to help ensure the construction of the best possible tanker. Some builders will try to limit the number of owner supervisors and the number of owner inspections. Some shipbuilders still have a separate quality assurance department while others base quality control more upon worker self-checking and the paper trail. The shipyard worker is in effect auditing his own work. The owner should establish what quality control procedures are in place at the yard. Some yards will limit the number of owner's inspections. Some builders insist that the owner only carries out a final inspection. The builder may have their reasons for this and the owner must be cautious. There should be official owner's inspections at all important stages, like surface preparation prior to paint application, fit of block joints before welding, final inspection before closing tanks and so on. In addition, it must be possible for the supervisors to enter the tanker outside any official inspection as ship construction proceeds, provided it can be done safely. If the builder is adamant that there will only be a final inspection, a starting point may be for the owner to suggest spot checking at first and then see in practice later what is required. There are also shipbuilders with very good quality controls and with a reputation for building good quality tankers. The negotiation stage is the right stage to uncover any wrong assumptions. Owner to be given at least 24 hours/one working day minimum advance notice for inspections. For trials and tests in the country of the shipbuilder, adequate notice must be given to enable attendees to arrange travel. For sea trials sufficient notice must be given to enable attendees to travel in from abroad.

The Shipyard standard is an elastic issue, from the point of view of an owner. Careful attention should be paid to what it actually means. What does the standard say about sharp edges in connection with ballast tank coating preparation? How will the edges be rounded? Is there any difference between the yard's interpretation of "stripe coats" and that full coats and stripe coats shall have different colour? Any difference in interpretation must be uncovered as early as possible.

The Owner must have the opportunity to attend shop tests of main and auxiliary engines, boilers, switchboards, pumps and other important equipment and machinery. The number of superintendents in the owner's supervisory team allowed at the site should be agreed in the contract.

Superintendents should be given free access and permission to take photos showing the progress of the newbuilding. The ship hull is normally built to suit the yard's production line as far as can be justified within the constraints allowed by the applicable regulations. The interpretation of these rules can sometimes differ amongst the parties concerned. Some owners believe strongly that the construction of a strong, robust tanker pays in the long run and benefits the industry as a whole because such tankers very rarely make the headline for the wrong reasons, e.g. an oil spill accident. The problem with this philosophy is that the owner should adopt the philosophy that the basic 20-year ship service life standards are not enough. The paint manufacturer's inspector is under considerable pressure and will perform well, in general, if he can rely on the support of the owner's coating superintendent.

The Owner should always seek to engender a team spirit involving all the parties and directing the participants towards a common goal -taking care of the ship.

The Paint Manufacturer's representatives are normally expected to look after the yard's interest, and to inspect all surfaces. Under such an arrangement the shipyard can avoid responsibility when anything goes wrong. Yards can then state that since the paint maker and the contractor together are responsible for the problem, they are obliged to solve it. This is why the owner must have his own super-intendent (or team) to make sure that all parties stand by their commitments. The yard, the contractor and the paint manufacturer, with the owner's oversight, must prepare detailed painting procedures (or job specifications) for each major coating area, outlining all pertinent factors, including acceptance criteria and agreed courses of action when procedures are violated or other problems arise. The owner should develop a maintenance strategy and the appropriate tools to be used, depending on the intent of the repairs. The maintenance strategy should ensure that corrosion is not permitted to cause a severe necking effect or the coating film breakdown of large areas. It is not cost effective to wait with coating repairs until partial steel renewal is required. The paint manufacturer does not necessarily have the same objectives as the owner. The paint manufacturer will be more interested in continuing to sell large quantities of paint to the shipbuilder. The owner must look after the tanker and his own interests. The owner is seeking a paint system that lasts reasonably well for some time after the guarantee period has expired and before coating maintenance is required. By insisting on this goal being achieved, the owner is helping to ensure that all involved parties behave responsibly. Two stripe coats and two full coats in the ballast and cargo tanks are generally recommended for a service life of about 15 years. The coats and the stripe coats should have different colours to ease the application. The three-coat system is required for a 20-year or longer service life. The most common cause of coating failure and early corrosion in those locations is cracking due to shrinkage of the coating from loss of migratory solvents from the paint.

Obtain copy of hydrostatic testing requirements in advance for consideration. Be cautious if the shipyard suggests limiting the hydrostatic testing. There is always a reason, but it is rarely to the owner's advantage. The sea trial condition is straightforward in most cases. The shipbuilding contract may contain penalty clauses. However, it will pay to be clear on what is agreed during the negotiating stages. There is nothing clearer than an example. The example should include all correction factors and where they come from, and should be easy to follow. The owner should reserve the right to have his own independent specialist to observe model tests and attend the sea trials. The yard should give ample notice time for the model tests and the trials. The propeller could be designed with a light running margin to account for fouling and hull roughness. This is important to check. The speed measuring method should be agreed. The fuel oil meters should be calibrated by a recognised organisation and the accuracy noted on the certificate of accuracy.

Good working relations come naturally when both parties are satisfied.

Alkoc Shipping