

Lintec warns against cutting corners

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Lintec Testing Services has warned shipowners, operators and charterers against cutting corners when it comes to choosing bunker testing laboratories.

"With the marine industries, like all others, under acute financial pressure at the moment, it is no surprise to find that some sectors of the shipping industry are contemplating whether it is worth forgoing quality for a lower perceived price," said Geoff Jones, managing director of Lintec. He said the answer must be 'No'.

Jones acknowledged that there is increased competition in the bunker testing industry, but told Bunkerworld it was worth the premium to use the services of accredited companies and laboratories.

"The minimum entry level for any testing agency must be a documented Quality Management System (QMS). This is designed to ensure that, at a basic level, the quality, administrative and technical systems which govern the operations of a testing agency are well-documented," he said in a press release today.

"The next tier is certification of the management system for conformity to an international standard, usually ISO 9001:2000, recently superseded by ISO 9001:2008," Jones explained.

"But since 2005 the 'gold standard' has been ISO/IEC 17025:2005 (E), which specifies the requirements for competence to carry out testing in a manner not covered by ISO 9001."

ISO 17025 looks at the technical competence of the testing agency's laboratory, arguably the most important part of a testing agency's work.

This makes ISO 17025 accreditation particularly suited to prove the credentials of a testing service, and makes it "the standards to which fuel-testing agencies should aspire," Jones commented.

"Lintec's UK laboratory has been operating to ISO /IEC 17025 standards since 2005. We are now awaiting the final piece in the jigsaw, which is the audit by UK Accreditation Services. This is expected in early 2009. Meanwhile, our laboratories in Rotterdam, Shanghai and Singapore are already accredited to this level," Jones said.

"Employing a non-accredited laboratory for your bunker testing may result in a vessel burning poor-quality fuel, with all the ensuing operational and commercial difficulties this brings with it," Jones concluded.

Unni Einemo, 9th December 2008 17:56 GMT

Comments? Email editor@bunkerworld.com.



Geoff Jones, managing director, Lintec Testing Services

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