SED – The Facts and the Implications

Following the enforcement of the Solvent Emissions Directive at the end of October 2007, International Paint, in conjunction with industry partners, is working to ensure that our customers have access to accurate and concise information.

And, whilst strongly supporting industry efforts to make these regulations workable for our affected customers, we will also be providing training and support tools, designed to facilitate compliance and address many commonly asked questions.

What is the SED?
The Solvent Emissions Directive (SED) is EU legislation which aims to prevent or reduce emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds (“VOCs”) into air by regulating solvent-based activities which are the source of these VOC emissions.

In general, operations such as boatyards that are affected by the SED will need to either:

- Filter out VOCs from emissions to air and meet a VOC emission limit value in discharged waste gases; or
- Implement a plan to reduce solvent use by adoption of a solvent emission reduction scheme.
Who does the legislation affect?
In general, any facility (such as a boatyard, boat builder, application facility etc.) is affected, if its annual use of VOC totals 5 tonnes (5,000 kg) per year, or more. Larger users of VOCs (e.g. more than 15 tons per year) are more heavily restricted, and there are different types of limits for different operations. For example in the pleasure craft industry, metal coating operations have different VOC emission limits to wood coating operations.

We are not the only industry affected. In fact, the SED is not just about paint and coatings products, it is relevant to any facility which produces solvent emissions - some 20 different activities in total, ranging from dry cleaning to footwear manufacture.

How do I know how much VOC is contained in the products I use?
The amount of VOCs contained within a product is detailed on the Material Safety Data Sheet (“MSDS”) available from the manufacturer of the product. International Paint product labels and Product Data Sheets contain information relating to VOC content, this data is also supplied pre-loaded into the Solvent Emissions Reporting™ tool which has been developed in conjunction with ICOMIA.

How can a yard become compliant?
Under the SED, yards have a legal obligation to comply with VOC regulations set by the country in which they operate. In order to become compliant with this legislation, yards have the option to take one of two approaches, both of which require the preparation of an inventory of all solvent containing products used in the yard.

- Option 1 – In this approach, the yard must capture and filter all VOC emissions as they are drawn through a chimney stack or similar. They must also track and quantify all ‘fugitive’ emissions that may escape via open windows, doors, drains etc. This option is applicable to a yard in which coating activities are carried out inside a building.

- Option 2 – Where it is impossible to capture VOC emissions (for example, outdoor painting or surface cleaning operations) yards are required to comply by implementing a ‘Solvent
Reduction Scheme’ – whereby they must reduce VOC use to meet a given target. This approach is based around each yard calculating their own annual emissions of VOC based on their product inventory and taking into account usage, purchases and recycling activities.

Is there a European-wide ruling on solvent emissions levels?
EU member states must implement the SED in their national laws, setting an EU wide standard, but it is possible that individual Member State restrictions may be tighter than those set out in the SED, if the country suffers heavily from VOC pollution.

Can a ‘product’ be SED Compliant?
Some companies are marketing ‘SED Compliant Coatings’. This is misleading as the SED regulates the total amount of VOC used by a boatyard and not the amount of VOC in individual paint products. If you rely on so-called SED compliant products to comply, you may be in violation of the SED regulations. The SED does not impose an approach which limits the amount of solvent in each product.

The SED requires that yards adopt a solvent reduction scheme, as a route to compliance. This means that a yard is permitted to use a set amount of total VOC over any one year. This approach allows the yard to select a combination of high and low VOC containing products to comply.

What is International Paint doing to help our customers meet the requirements of these new regulations?
International Paint, along with our sister company, Awlgrip, are sponsoring ICOMIA’s efforts to work with the European Commission to implement the SED, in a way which is workable within the marine industry.

Secondly, we are actively working to develop products to support our customers’ regulatory challenges – this is a key focus for International Paint, now and in the future.
Finally, to help yards and builders plan their compliance activities, we have developed a Solvent Emissions Reporting™ tool. This digital tool comes fully formatted with International Paint products to save customers the complicated task of inputting product data sheet figures, as is required.

Our network of partners
Working closely with international and regional organisations such as the International Council of Marine Industry Associations (ICOMIA) and The European Council of the Paint, Printing Ink and Artists' Colours Industry (CEPE), International Paint has been able to learn from the difficult experiences that boatyards have had in trying to implement the SED and will continue to lobby the European Commission (EC) to make sure that the ‘Solvent Reduction Scheme’ continues as a preferred method for compliance to ensure that our customers are able to have the widest choice of products possible.

Where to go for more information
Information regarding the SED and other regulatory issues will shortly be available on our Trade Website, yachtpaint.com/trade

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Notes to the Editor:
International Paint, based in Felling, Newcastle upon Tyne provides the latest antifouling paints, epoxy resins and associated boat maintenance products for the refurbishment and new build of all pleasure boats. International Paint is a leading supplier of high performance Marine Coatings and is a part of Akzo Nobel, a market driven, technology-based company. Akzo Nobel, based in the Netherlands, serves customers throughout the world with healthcare products, coatings and chemicals. Consolidated sales for 2003 totalled EUR 13 billion. The Company currently employs approximately 64,500 people in more than 80 countries.

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