

## Bulletin 459 - 03/06 - Examination and testing of intermediate bulk containers - Worldwide

The UK Government Department for Transport (DfT) Dangerous Goods branch has issued a Dangerous Goods Guidance Note regarding the examination and testing of intermediate bulk containers.

Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBCs) intended for the carriage of dangerous goods are required to undergo initial inspections and subsequent periodic inspections at 2.5 and 5 year intervals. These tests and inspections will need to be repeated following any repair (but not following routine maintenance). The main requirements in relation to testing and periodic inspection of IBCs are set out below:

- Before being filled and handed over for carriage, every IBC must be inspected to ensure it is free from corrosion, contamination or other damage, and that any service equipment functions properly. Any IBC which shows signs of reduced strength as compared with the tested design type must be repaired or routinely maintained before it is used again.
- Every metal, rigid plastics and composite IBC shall be inspected to the satisfaction of the competent authority:
  - a. before it is put into service, and at intervals not exceeding five years, with regard to:
    - I. Conformity to design type including marking
    - II. Internal and external condition
    - III. Proper functioning of service equipment.

Thermal insulation, if any, need be removed only to the extent necessary for a proper examination of the body of the IBC.

- b. at intervals of not more than two and a half years, with regard to:
  - I. External condition
  - II. Proper functioning of service equipment.



- A report of each inspection shall be kept by the owner of the IBC at least until the next inspection. The report shall include the results of the inspection and shall identify the party performing the inspection.
- A leak-proof test is required for those types of IBC used for liquids or for solids filled or discharged under pressure, as a design type test and periodic test. The test is to be carried out for a period of at least ten minutes using air at a gauge pressure of not less than twenty kPa (0.2 bar). The air-tightness of the IBC shall be determined by a suitable method such as by the air-pressure differential test or by immersing the IBC in water or, for metal IBCs, by coating the seams and joints with a soap solution. In the case of immersion, a correction factor shall be applied for the hydrostatic pressure. Other methods at least equally effective may be used.
- Any person undertaking the manufacture and testing of IBCs should have suitable training to ensure they are familiar with the type of IBC and the tests required. They should have access to the relevant test report data.
- Competent Authorities may require proof, at any time, to ensure IBCs meet the design type tests. In Great Britain, this is done through the time-limiting of certificates. Re-testing may be required before a certificate is re-issued.