

Health and Safety Executive OC 306/10

Field Operations Division

To

Agricultural, Factory and Quarries Inspectors

FCG Specialist Inspector (Mech)

STEAM BOILER EXAMINATIONS

Introduction

1. This OC introduces a new Booklet which contains guidelines for competent persons examining steam boilers.

Background

2. In 1988, following 2 boiler explosions caused by failure of the longitudinal welded seam (TD 2B/INF/8/88 refers), a joint working group was set up to study the factors which led to failures, and to make recommendations for future examinations. The members of the working group were drawn from Associated Offices Technical Committee (AOTC), Independent Engineering Insurers Committee (IEIC), and HSE (TD and RLSD).

3. As a result of this study, guidelines have been produced for the use of competent persons to enable them to form a judgement as to the periods between non-destructive examinations of the seam.

4. The Booklet, entitled *Shell Type Steam Boilers - AOTC guidelines for measurement of peaking, and calculation of ultrasonic inspection intervals*, apply to all shell-type steam boilers (of BS 2790 or equivalent standard) and is published by the AOTC, price £2. Copies of the guidelines are being issued to file 306.

5. The publication is primarily for the use of competent persons, but the contents include, inter alia, an introduction and brief history, and a discussion section, which inspectors may find of interest.

Advice to inspectors

6. Competent persons will be requiring access to the external side of the longitudinal weld in shell-type steam boilers where internal access is limited. This will require additional facilities, and may give rise to queries from occupiers. The current experience is 3 explosions and 4 instances of leak or cracking at this seam in 4 years. In view of this, the competent person should be given support unless there are strong technical reasons for deciding otherwise.

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