



# Tank savings

With the introduction of the ADR 2013 regulations just around the corner, John Challen looks at what the tanker industry can expect

**T**he latest update to the ADR regulations (covering transportation of dangerous goods by road) comes into force on 1 January 2013, with amendments designed to increase safety. Among these are new requirements concerning: carriage of chemicals under pressure; dangerous goods packed in limited quantities; and restrictions on the use of road tunnels.

Broadly operational changes, then. But, as Tasca Tankers technical director Tom McDonnell says, such controls may well have an impact on the specification of tankers and hence their engineering. "Before this type of regulation, things were governed by petroleum regulations. But, with the introduction of ADR, which is more heavily linked to European regulations and requirements, there is more control over what is transported, and how," he comments. And he points to the introduction of X-ray inspection for tanker cargos, aimed at improving safety.

However, tanker regulation is not just about changing ADR rules. VOSA (the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency), for example, is looking at going electronic with ADR testing. That will not only make administration more efficient, but also enable electronic transfer of documentation between locations.

Steve Whitehart, the agency's ADR technical officer and heavy vehicle process manager, makes the point that 14,000 ADR tests are undertaken every year. While the changes to OCRS (Operator Compliance Risk Score) – implemented on 1 October 2012 – now mean that ADR roadside inspections count for OCRS purposes, ADR test results currently do not. Watch this space.

For McDonnell, though, assuming good compliance, the primary issue for operators remains maximising profits. No one wants anything that will restrict the cargo they can transport, dangerous or not, he reasons. As a result, materials of construction are key, which is why around 99% of Tasca's tankers are now built using aluminium. And in the quest for increased capacity, no stone is left unturned.

"We make all of the brackets from aluminium and are finding new ways to reduce weight all the time," explains McDonnell.

It's an ongoing process, he says, adding that nothing gets in the way of vehicle robustness. "Our policy is to ensure that our tankers are sturdy. Yes, you may lose 60–100kg in weight, but, on the other hand, you're not going to have any downtime from tankers going to the garage to be repaired."

Aluminium might cost a bit extra, but McDonnell has seen 900kg shaved off a six-wheeler tanker by switching from stainless steel. "If you can take an extra 1,000 litres of fuel, you are making more money on each journey. After seven years, you might have saved £35,000–40,000," he observes. **TE**

## Tanker seminar

At the recent FTA (Freight Transport Association) seminar on fuel tankers, changes to testing and maintenance were top of the agenda. Andrew Sykes, technical manager from the Energy Institute, highlighted the requirements of DSEAR (Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations) and its relevance to workshops where fuel tankers are maintained. Employers are required to assess all risks and to effect controls.

Robert Harris, managing director of Amber Engineering, covered changes to CEN (European Committee for Standardisation) standards around fuel tankers, referenced in ADR legislation. He explained that most standards have been revised and should be harmonised by the end of 2013.

Graeme Hughes, HM inspector from the HSE, explained the agency's new 'Fees For Intervention' charge, levied on tanker operators, if there is a material breach of the Carriage Regulations. Charges (at £124 an hour) apply to all aspects of remedial work until an issue is resolved.

He also raised the issue of ageing tanks, revealing that HSE is looking at accelerated fatigue caused by thinner tank shells. And he cited issues relating to biofuels on tankers, including stress corrosion cracking of carbon steels and failure of some rubbers used for gaskets and 'o' rings.