

Foul-release technology proves popular with operators

With the price of bunker fuel still rising, and environment protection assuming a higher priority, more sophisticated coatings systems, including foul-release products, are being used both on newbuildings and during maintenance dockings

Earlier this year, UK-based International Paint reached an important milestone for its patented fluoropolymer-based, foul-release product, Intersleek 900, with the coating of its 100th vessel – a K Line bulk carrier, *Corona Emblem* – with this environment friendly system. A significant number of further orders have since been secured, and Intersleek now has a track record of 130 vessels, of which 16 are ferries, ro-ro ships or high speed catamarans.

One ferry operator that is making extensive use of Intersleek 900 is the cross-Solent specialist, Wightlink. The company has a total fleet of eight conventional and three fast ferries and on average, approximately 68,000 sailings are made each year.

It will also have three new Wight-class ships – *Wight Light*, and sisters *Wight Sky* and *Wight Sun* – by the end of next year; the first is due for delivery shortly from the Kraljevica yard in Croatia.

After comparing the performance results of various coatings in service on its fleet, Wightlink selected Intersleek 900. The vertical sides of *Fastcat Ryde*, *Our Lady Pamela* and *Fastcat Shanklin* have since been coated with this product.

Wightlink has kept a close watch on the effect of coating these vessels with Intersleek 900 and has identified a significant speed increase after application. The high speed catamarans also now run at reduced engine revolutions, and this has triggered associated fuel savings, International Paint reports.

According to the company, Intersleek 900 is 'exceptionally smooth, with unprecedented low levels of average hull roughness, excellent foul release capabilities and good resistance to mechanical damage'. International Paint claims that for the very first time all vessels operating above 10 knots can now benefit from foul-release technology, a fact reflected in the diverse range of ship types and operational profiles in Intersleek 900's track record.

Predicted fuel and emissions savings



MC Technology's moisture cure urea coating is used for areas such as ro-ro decks

compared with the previous generation Intersleek 700 product are around two per cent, while a six per cent improvement in performance in comparison to biocide containing SPC (self polishing copolymer) antifouling is forecast. However, the company claims that customer experience on the more than 100 vessels now coated with the new product has demonstrated savings considerably higher than this, with some ships reporting improvement rates well into double figures.