

UK Boiler testing rules changes. Spring 2007.

The following changes to the 'Examination And Testing of Miniature Steam Boilers' code of practice (Spring 2007) have now been agreed and accepted by leading insurers in the UK.

These new rules effect those originally set out in the New Edition 2006 code of practice, these being the ones I detailed for you in an earlier post.

What follows are extracted clauses (in italics) as they are written, followed by, where it is felt beneficial, a line or two by me in order to clarify.

*Introduction, Page 3, para 4;
Small boilers (i.e boilers with a capacity of not more than 3.0 bar-litres) are exempted from the requirements of this code. However, it is recommended that small boilers be fitted with, at least, a safety valve and a pressure gauge and that these be tested every 12 months in order to ensure correct operation at the correct release pressure. The boiler and the pipework installation should also be checked at least every 12 months.*

This is good news for the majority of you, since it doubles the original exemption figure of 1.5 bar/ litre capacity, and is the biggest change from a model boating point of view. Basically it now means that at least 85% of our model boat boilers are now exempt from the requirements of the new code....**i.e they DO NOT need to be Tested.**

A telephone call, made to the notifying body/publishers of these new rules, confirmed that **'EXEMPT' also includes the steam test requirements.**

Having said this, they then highlighted/emphasised the recommendation made in the statement above, and I must agree that they should be implemented by everyone, for your own safety, as well as that of other bystanders....in actual fact I am surprised that these were not made MANDATORY.

For the remainder of you (those with boilers greater than 3 bar/litre capacity) you will still be required to get your boilers pressure tested every 4 years and steam tested every year (Max 14 months) , however, the following changes have been made to the steam test rules.....

10 Steam Test

10.1 An examination under steam pressure shall be undertaken, a) before first placing the boiler into service, b) after every hydraulic test, and c) at intervals not exceeding fourteen months.

10.2 The boiler shall be steamed and further examinations carried out as pressure is rising and whilst the boiler is at working pressure.

10.3 Correct operation of the following items shall be verified:
- Boiler water feeding arrangements by at least two independent means (hand pump, injectors, mechanical pump, etc.)
- Pressure gauge
- The water gauge(s) should be blown down and the water should be seen to recover to its level without delay.

On boilers of less than 10 bar-litre capacity with a total internal volume not exceeding two (2) litres it is acknowledged that the provision of two independent means of water feed arrangement may not be possible. Therefore for the purpose of testing of these boilers:

- a) One (1) means of water feed arrangement is acceptable.***
- b) Water in the gauge glass must recover its level without delay following movement of the boiler.***
- c) Water gauges fitted to boats whose boilers fall within this size category do not have to be capable of being blown down.***

The water gauge and pressure gauge should be clearly visible.

10.4 The boiler shall then be steamed at maximum firing rate and with full blower operation. The test shall be continued for sufficient time as to allow the Inspector to be satisfied that stable conditions have been attained. The operation of the safety valves shall be checked to ensure that they operate at working pressure and that pressure does not rise by more than 10% of the working pressure during safety valve operation.

I would think that the paragraph in bold italics will cover the new requirements for most of you.

A single means of adding water, whilst under pressure, can take the form of...a hand operated pump via a non-return valve....an external pump (steam or electric) via a non-return valve...(in the case of a steam pump then it may be necessary to have this driven from a separate boiler (certified if required)....a simple alternative would be to replace the normal filler cap with a 'Goodal' valve....these allow the addition of water from a suitably modified squeeze bottle (both available commercially)...and often used on Garden Railway Loco's.

On the surface of it, these new rules are great news for you as users...and, in theory, good for me, as a manufacturer, however, I am required, by law, under the **sale of goods act, amongst others**, to ensure that my products are safe for public use, and therefore I will continue to fully test all ACS boilers, regardless of size, and issue a valid test certificate (4 yr) as normal.

Happy sailing.

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