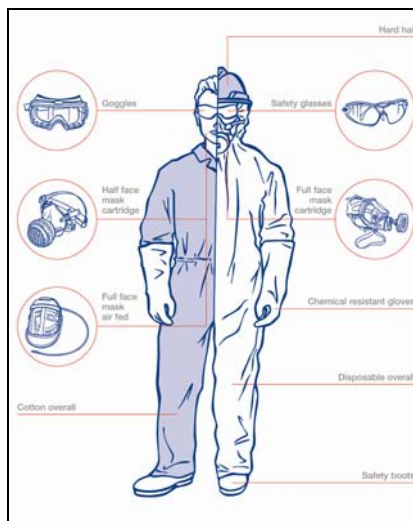


## For immediate release

Louise Bebbington  
International Paint Ltd  
Stoneygale Lane  
Felling, Gateshead  
Tyne & Wear NE10 OJY  
United Kingdom  
louise.bebbington@internationalpaint.com  
Tel +44 (0) 191 4012364  
Fax +44 (0) 191 4022486

## Working Safely with Antifouling Paints

*Article originally published in Yachting Matters, April 2008*



As members of the yachting community we are all being made increasingly aware of the potential impact our activities may have on the environment. Excessive fuel consumption and poor engine efficiency can contribute to smog, waste tank discharge can pollute waters and boating in sensitive areas can affect the balance of aquatic life. Whilst significant steps are being taken globally to manage these potential environmental impacts, in an effort to ensure a clean, safe environment for all of us to enjoy our boating passion – it's fair to raise the question – 'Are we taking our own personal health and safety as seriously?'

The application of any paint product, whether to the interior or exterior of a boat, must be done with full consideration to personal safety. Paint manufacturers are required, by law, to state the necessary precautions needed during application; this information can be found on the product label and on the material safety data sheet (MSDS) and both these should be read fully prior to application. Most coatings suppliers publish product MSDSs on their websites and/or provide printed versions within retailers.

Whether you are working on a boat as a crew member or as an applicator one of the most common paint products that you are likely to use is antifouling. Whilst the majority of antifouling sold today are considerably safer than those used by previous generations, these products can still contain hazardous substances such as solvents and active ingredients that need to be handled with due care and attention, as detailed on the label and MSDS.

## **Working with Antifouling Paints**

Applying antifouling paints can be done safely providing the applicator protects themselves by using personal protective equipment (PPE) and follows instructions on the product label. This is important as, upon contact with bare skin, solvents within an antifouling may chemically dissolve the oils it contains (defat). They also contain active ingredients (or biocides) some of which are classified as 'irritants' that can cause skin rashes. In some cases, antifouling may contain substances classified as skin sensitizers, which can cause an allergic reaction in people with sensitive skin. It is also important that people who are working in areas close to where painting is underway are protected as overspray and paint dust can also be hazardous. Dry paint and overspray dust on overalls can also cause irritation if it comes into direct contact with skin, especially if the skin is wet or sweaty, for example under the sweatband of a hard hat, or inside gloves.

Another hazard the operator must guard against is the inhalation of solvent or paint spray particles; this should be prevented to avoid possible health effects.

## **Personal Protection: Clothing and Equipment**

It is recommended that before beginning work all members of the application team read both the product label, the MSDS and ensure they take action to protect themselves as necessary. Clothing that should be worn includes:

- \* A long sleeved, long legged cotton overall;
- \* A second disposable overall, with a hood;
- \* Long-sleeved solvent-resistant gloves;
- \* Hard hat
- \* Safety boots which cover the ankle and lower leg; and
- \* Eye protection – full face mask, or at least safety goggles.

In addition to the above, the applicator and any assistant/driver with him, should wear full respiratory protection to prevent exposure to solvents and to protect the facial skin. Best practice is to wear a full face mask with tear-off vision strips, preferably airfed or equipped with the appropriate solvent and particulate filters. Other members of the application team should also wear personal protective equipment including half-face respirators with solvent and particulate filters. It is important to ensure that the correct filter cartridge (suitable for antifouling application) is used at all times.

Overalls must be fully fastened at all times, to avoid skin contact with the antifouling paint and the hood worn over the head, pulled tightly around the face. Care should be taken around any overall cuffs to prevent skin exposure; tape can be used to secure sleeves and gloves and the inner-overall trouser legs may be tucked inside boots.

In hot climates a single overall, worn next to the skin, can become completely wet with sweat. If this happens it is possible that, if the overall is heavily contaminated with paint, the operators' skin may be exposed to small quantities of the paint. Some of the paint components may then irritate the skin. To prevent this, two overalls are recommended; the inner cotton overall will draw excess moisture away from the skin, the outer impervious overall will act as a barrier against paint absorption. Cotton overalls should be changed and washed after every shift, disposable overalls should be changed every time they are removed and at least on a daily basis.

If there is any paint breakthrough to the cotton overalls, they should be replaced with a new pair.

Solvent-resistant gloves should be replaced if there is any sign of solvent breakthrough, or as soon as they become dirty inside.

## Personal Protection: Skin and Eyes

Full face masks worn with hoods should cover all facial skin. Half face masks, goggles and hoods should cover as much skin as possible and any exposed skin should be protected with a proprietary barrier cream (not petroleum jelly): *it is always better to cover the skin than to use a barrier cream.*

Full and half-face masks should be cleaned with detergent and water, inside and out, and stored in a clean, dedicated container at the end of each shift. Half-face mask filter cartridges should be changed daily or more frequently if breakthrough occurs. A new cartridge should be fitted at the beginning of each application.

Fabric sweat bands, especially those used in hard hats, should be washed daily and the hats cleaned with detergent and water to remove any dirt and dryspray contamination.

The importance of personal cleanliness and hygiene cannot be stressed enough. Time should be taken to wash carefully before eating and drinking and also to wash thoroughly at the end of every application; this will prevent ingestion and/or the transference of any paint contaminants.

## **Personal Protection: Working Practices**

The best way of protecting people is to minimise the exposure risk; firstly by limiting the number of people in direct contact with any antifouling application and, secondly, by ensuring that those exposed are both fully trained and equipped with the recommended PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).

During spray application, the only people in the area should be the applicator and his assistant/cherry picker driver. Potmen and any supervisory staff should be up-wind of the spraying and everyone else should be completely excluded from the spray area.

Following application, care should be taken to avoid contact with the painted surfaces, particularly if they are still wet. To reduce exposure to dry spray, it should be removed before it can become airborne; this can be done by either gentle brushing (never use compressed air to blow this off) or by wetting the dry spray and removing it whilst it is damp. Information on the safe disposal of contaminated waste can be obtained from local waste authorities.

Use of protective sheeting or tenting during application will limit the likelihood of dryspray escaping and is a good working practice to follow.

## **Training**

The most effective way of delivering safe working practices in a yard and encouraging safe behaviour is via regular, comprehensive training. Training needs to be supported by clear procedural documentation. It requires endorsement and constant enforcement by those with management responsibilities, and those in the industry with a duty of care, to ensure that antifouling paints and indeed all paint and coating products are handled with respect; in the context of both the global and our more immediate environments.

*Guidance on safe working practices is provided on the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) of all International Paint products.*

*For more information on product, practical training or paint application visit [yachtpaint.com](http://yachtpaint.com) and [yachtpaint.com/trade](http://yachtpaint.com/trade).*

– Ends –

3 March 2008

#### Notes to the Editor:

International Paint, based in Felling, Newcastle upon Tyne provides the latest antifouling paints, epoxy resins and associated boat maintenance products for the refurbishment and new build of all pleasure boats. International Paint is a leading supplier of high performance Marine Coatings and is a part of Akzo Nobel, a market driven, technology-based company. Akzo Nobel, based in the Netherlands, serves customers throughout the world with coatings and chemicals.

®, International® and Akzo Nobel logo are trademarks of or licensed to Akzo Nobel.

© Akzo Nobel 2008.