



Legislative & Regulatory Action Center

COMPLIANCE BULLETIN

January 9, 2009

UNDERWRITERS LABORATORY TECHNICAL REVIEW ON BIODIESEL BLENDS

BACKGROUND: A technical review conducted by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) has determined that ASTM compliant biodiesel blends up to B5 - used in equipment designed to operate on diesel fuel and heating oil - pose no adverse safety issues.

ACTION: As a result, such equipment will not be subject to special investigation and individual certification by UL.

MORE INFORMATION: UL conducted the technical review in cooperation with the US Department of Energy, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and the National Biodiesel Board. UL also conducted performance testing of heating equipment using B5. While no adverse safety issues were found from using B5 in place of heating oil or diesel fuel, UL determined such blends could lead to fuel quality problems, contaminate mobilization (cleansing) and microbial contamination. These performance issues however are outside the scope of UL testing and certification. Furthermore, the UL technical review found that use of biodiesel at levels above 5% in some equipment *may* have a "significant" adverse impact on materials, performance and combustion. UL is in the process of finalizing product safety requirements for equipment specified for use with biodiesel (B100) and biodiesel blends up to B20. The good news for petroleum marketers is that UL will not conduct special investigations on the compatibility of B5 blends with consumer product equipment. As far as UL is concerned, such use is "safe".

The bad news is that UL raises the specter of equipment performance problems when using B5 blends. Fortunately, UL does not make recommendations or certifications based on non-safety related performance issues.

NEFI WILL REPORT FURTHER ON THE UL REVIEW ONCE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE.

If you have additional questions, contact NEFI Regulatory Counsel Mark S. Morgan, Esq. at mark@nefi.com, or contact the NEFI Legislative & Regulatory Action Center at (617) 923-5022.