

DPA 'Touch of Class' for Workboats - Dynamic Positioning Class 1 and Class 2 Explained

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Abstract

As the major push in exploration moves further offshore, new requirements are put on the support vessels. Not only are they required to carry more supplies and perform more duties, they are expected to carry on continuously through difficult weather. Redundant systems allow the vessels to operate continuously under these conditions avoiding costly downtime and providing improved margins of safety. In addition, certified redundant vessels can often command higher day rates. Previous generation workboats were typically equipped with minimal automatic control systems or at most a simple, single, non-redundant DP system with single sensors. The enormous demands of deepwater are now requiring fully compliant Class 1 systems and in some cases even moving to fully redundant Class 2 systems. This paper will discuss the required equipment to meet each of these classifications from the dynamic positioning system aspect ranging from actual sensors specified to the range of equipment possible to meet a given classification. The rules for several classification bodies including American Bureau of Shipping (ABS), Det Norske Veritas (DNV), International Maritime Organization (IMO) and others will be compared. The certification procedure will be discussed to alert vessel owners to the increased testing times and submittals required for vessel classification. This will provide a reference for all owners and shipyards involved in or considering Class 1 or Class 2 workboat projects.

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