

Industrial Pipe, Valves and Fittings Council: Material Test Reports Subcommittee: Final Report

Purpose

The goal of the Material Test Report Subcommittee was to examine the possibility of trying to reduce or eliminate the need for filing paper MTR's throughout all of the levels of the supply chain. Would it be possible to put the onus on the manufacturers and master distributors to have the documentation readily available? The Subcommittee elected to first develop a survey to members in order to gain an understanding of what companies' current processes are with regards to MTR's; why do they think they need MTR's and how do they maintain them? The Subcommittees' goal was to find out the "when, why and how" with regards to the MTR process.

Survey Results

The Subcommittee asked CIPH member companies if they maintained electronic or paper files and found that while 58% keep them electronically, some companies maintain both, as 75% of respondents indicated that they keep a paper file. The length of time that companies are retaining MTR's was found to be evenly spread across the segments 0 - 3 years, 4 - 7 years and over 7 years with roughly 1/3 of companies in each.

72% of respondents said the need for MTR's was job specific. 26% said that they always require MTR's and others reported that it was driven by the product type or product specification. As far as what's driving this, 93% said that it was required by their customer as well as 43% who said it is a TSSA requirement. When the Council asked TSSA to comment on feedback, this they stated that their inspectors should only be demanding to see MTR's when it is required by the code. TSSA went on to say that the code demands this only in specific instances which is a very low percentage of the time. 61% of companies are of the belief that the MTR is a material specification requirement and others maintain them because of their own QA, their insurance policy, or legal requirements.

Survey Conclusions

The results and answers from the survey suggest that the need for maintaining paper Material Test Reports is basically a "peace of mind" issue. Companies aren't really clear on the actual code and specification requirements but maintain MTR's "just in case". They want to have them in case a customer requests them or in case an inspector asks to see one. For these reasons, the requirement to maintain paper copies of MTR's has been written into most company policies and QA manuals. The MTR Subcommittee has concluded that if all elements along the supply chain were properly educated on the matter and had a better understanding of the actual specifications and code body requirements, it could theoretically be possible to reduce the need for everyone maintaining paper MTR's. However, it is the opinion of the subcommittee that the realistic chances of making this happen and getting the buy-in required throughout the industry is not a realistic goal at this stage. Some companies are issuing less paper. Some companies are requiring MTR's only in specific instances. However, a significant amount of the passing along of paper MTR's is here to stay for the foreseeable future. The IPVF Council recommends that companies looking to reduce the

need for paper MTR's, companies would be best advised to investigate the various private sources for electronic MTR and other metals industry specific document management and traceability software. A good example of a traceability software provider is MetalTrace; visit: www.traceapplications.com/app/metal.aspx for more information on this type of service.

At the present time, the Council will put the MTR Subcommittee on hiatus, and will re-examine the issue in two years time.