

Commonwealth of Dominica



Office of the Maritime Administrator

TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF MERCHANT SHIPS, AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS

SUBJECT: Implementation of MARPOL Annex IV, Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships.

REFERENCES: (a) International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as Modified by the Protocol of 1978 [hereinafter "MARPOL"];

(b) MARPOL Annex IV, as amended from time to time including the amendments contained in Resolution MEPC.274(69) – Amendments to the Annex of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as Modified by the Protocol of 1978 Relating Thereto [hereinafter "Annex IV"];

(c) Resolution MEPC.2(VI) – Recommendation on International Effluent Standards and Guidelines for Performance Tests for Sewage Treatment Plants, Adopted on 3 December 1976;

(d) Resolution MEPC.159(55) – Revised Guidelines on Implementation of Effluent Standards and Performance Tests for Sewage Treatment Plants, Adopted on 13 October 2006;

(d) Resolution MEPC.227(64) – 2012 Guidelines on Implementation of Effluent Standards and Performance Tests for Sewage Treatment Plants, Adopted on 5 October 2012, as further amended by Resolution MEPC.284(70) – Amendments to the 2012 Guidelines on Implementation of Effluent Standards and Performance Tests for Sewage Treatment Plants (Resolution MEPC.227(64)), Adopted on 28 October 2016;

(e) Resolution MEPC.157(55) – Recommendations on Standards for the Rate of Discharge of Untreated Sewage from Ships, Adopted on 13 October 2006;

(f) Resolution MEPC.200(62) – Amendments to the Annex of the Protocol of 1978 Relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, Adopted on 15 July 2011; and

(g) Resolution MEPC.275(69) – Establishment of the Date on Which Regulation 11.3 of MARPOL Annex IV in Respect of the Baltic Sea Special Area Shall Take Effect, Adopted on 22 April 2016.

APPLICABILITY: This circular applies to all Dominica flagged ships to which Annex IV applies, defined in Annex IV as all vessels of 400 gross tonnage or more which are engaged in international voyages or are certified to carry more than 15 persons (hereinafter “Covered Vessels”). All regulations referred to within this circular are the regulations of Annex VI.

PURPOSE:

The Commonwealth of Dominica is currently not signatory to MARPOL Annex IV. Nonetheless, the Administration hereby requires that all Dominica-flagged Covered Vessels comply with the regulations of Annex IV, receive Statements of Compliance from either the Administration or an authorized Recognized Organization displaying said compliance, and adhere to the regulations within the Annex at all times. The Administration reiterates that proper waste management onboard its vessels is not only required, but an ethically sound practice deserving of attention by all vessels and their crew: untreated sewage contaminate waterways and may rapidly deprive those waterways of oxygen, causing further damage to marine species and potentially immediate impacts to the public global health.

Annex IV is the principal international instrument regulating wastewater discharges from vessels, and further requiring the fitting of covered vessels with the appropriate discharge systems. The purpose of this Circular is to detail these requirements, with which Dominica-flagged vessels covered by Annex IV shall comply.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Types of Sewage Wastewater

1.1 There are two general categories of sewage wastewater discharged from vessels:

- 1.1.1 Grey Water – generated by the use of sinks, showers, and/or laundry and dishwashing.
- 1.1.2 Blackwater – waste/drainage from: toilets and urinals, from spaces containing live animals or waters mixed with discharges from such spaces, and/or medical discharges from a ship’s hospital (wash basins, showers, etc.).

1.2 For purposes of the regulations contained in Annex IV and for purposes of this Circular, “Sewage” is defined as: “(a) drainage and other wastes from any form of toilets, urinals, and WC scuppers; (b) drainage from medical premises (dispensary, sick bay, etc.) via wash basins, wash tubs and scuppers located in such premises; (c) drainage from spaces containing living animals; or (d) other waste waters when mixed with the drainages defined above.”

2. Fitting of Vessels with Appropriate System

2.1 All Covered Vessels are required to be fitted with one of the following three Sewage systems: an approved Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), an approved sewage comminuting and disinfecting systems, OR a sewage holding tank. Any such system must meet the capacity needs of the vessel as determined by the vessel’s Classification Society.

2.2 Current approval standards for these systems are delineated in:

- 2.2.1 MEPC.2(VI) for STPs installed prior to 1 January 2010;
- 2.2.2 MEPC.159(55) for STPs installed on or after 1 January 2010 but prior to 1 January 2016;
- 2.2.3 MEPC227(64) as further amended by MEPC.284(70), excluding Section 4.2 therein, for STPs installed on or after 1 January 2016; and
- 2.2.4 The entirety of MEPC.227(64) as further amended by MEPC.284(70), inclusive of Section 4.2 therein, for all STPs onboard passenger ships engaged in the Baltic Sea special area, as described further and on dates listed in Section 4 below.

3. Discharges of Sewage from Vessels

3.1 All Covered Vessels are strictly prohibited from discharging Sewage wastewater from a vessel unless such discharges are conducted in accordance with the following:

- 3.1.1 The discharging vessel is fitted with an approved Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), in which case Sewage may be discharged at any location so long as the effluent has no visible floating solids and it does not cause discoloration of the surrounding water. The implementation of effluent guidelines, and STP performance testing, can be found in MEPC.227(64) as further amended by MEPC.284(70), where Section 4.2 (nitrogen and phosphorus removal standard) is only applicable to passenger ships as defined in Section 4 of this Circular. ISPP Certificate forms now include two options for approval under MEPC.227(64) – with and without Section 4.2.
- 3.1.2 Such vessel is fitted with an approved comminuting and disinfecting system, in which case Sewage may only be discharged at a distance of 3nm or more from the nearest land.¹
- 3.1.3 Such vessel is fitted with a sewage holding tank meeting the capacity requirements for that vessel, in which case Sewage may only be discharged at a distance of 12nm or more from the nearest land provided that sewage held in these holding tanks is not discharged instantaneously. These discharges must further comply with MEPC.157(55), which provides for the required moderate rate of discharge while a vessel is en route and proceeding at a speed of not less than 4 knots. Discharge rate tables shall be submitted to the vessel's Classification Society in accordance with MEPC.157(55).

3.2 As evidence of compliance with these requirements in this Section 3, All Covered Vessels must obtain a Statement of Compliance from either the Administration or, if their Classification Society is a Recognized Organization, from the Classification Society. A copy of the Statement of Compliance shall be provided to the Administration by the Recognized Organization if it is providing said certificate.

¹ Per the Annex IV Regulations, “nearest land” is defined as the territorial sea baseline of the territory in question except for Australia, where the “nearest land” extends up to the outer edge of the Great Barrier Reef (NO discharges of any type are permitted in the area of the Great Barrier Reef).

4. Special Area for Discharge Regulation: the Baltic Sea

4.1 The IMO, through MEPC.200(62), designated the Baltic Sea as a “special area” under Annex IV in 2011, using regulation 1.11.2 of MARPOL Annex I as the defined area.

4.2 As a result of this designation, all Sewage discharges from passenger ships are categorically prohibited in the special area UNLESS the vessel meets the standards herein under Section 3.1.1.

4.3 The special area requirements come into effect as follows per MEPC.275(69):

4.3.1 1 June 2019 for new passenger ships,² defined as passenger ships with a building contract placed on or after 1 June 2019 OR delivered after 1 June 2021.

4.3.2 1 June 2021 for existing passenger ships, defined as passenger vessels which are not new passenger ships under 4.2.1.

4.3.3 1 June 2023 for existing passenger ships en route between a port outside of the special area and a port located east of 028°10'E (the Russian portion of the Gulf of Finland).

5. Additional Requirements Outside of Annex IV

5.1 With regard to discharges of wastewater from vessels, all vessel owners, officers, and crew members should further be aware of the local requirements for both Grey Water and Blackwater treatment and/or discharges in the vessel's areas of operation.

REQUIRED ACTION BY OWNERS/OPERATORS:

Shipowners and operators are required to ensure that their vessels are fully compliant with the applicable information contained within this circular and with Annex IV generally.

² The definition of “passenger ship” is a vessel which carries more than 12 passengers (i.e. anyone other than the master, crew, and/or others employed onboard a ship, and infants under the age of one).

Shipowners and operators are also responsible for any violations of Annex IV vis-à-vis Port State authorities; thus, it is incumbent upon owners and operators alike to become intimately familiar with the language of the regulations contained therein.

Any questions can be directed to:

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