



Ship Type: All

Trade Area: USA

## **Bulletin 96 - 06/99 - USCG Interim Rule on Ballast Water Management - USA**

The USCG issued on May 17th, 1999 (*Federal Register*) the interim rule to implement the National Invasive Species Act of 1996. The rule establishes mandatory reporting and voluntary guidelines on ballast water management for nearly all vessels entering waters of the United States.

In accordance with the rule, from 1st July 1999, all vessels carrying ballast water from outside the EEZ, that operate in the waters of the U.S. (12 miles), shall be required to report the following information in writing to the USCG: **Vessel information; Voyage information; Total ballast water information; Ballast Water Management plan and use; Information on ballast water tanks; Information on discharge of sediment.**

These vessels shall also be required to take precautions in accordance with the voluntary guidelines laid down in the rule in order to minimize the uptake and the release of harmful aquatic organisms, pathogens and sediments. In addition, at least one of the following ballast water management practices shall be employed by the vessels: 1) exchange ballast water beyond the EEZ, before entering waters of the U.S.; 2) retain the ballast on board; 3) use an alternative ballast water management method approved by the Coast Guard; 4) discharge ballast water to an approved reception facility; 5) under extraordinary conditions exchange ballast water within an area agreed to by the COTP.

The Coast Guard will use the ballast water management reports to determine the level of participation in the voluntary guidelines program. If the level of participation is assessed inadequate, the USCG will make these guidelines mandatory.

More stringent rules apply to vessels arriving on the Hudson River and in the Great Lakes.

Four types of vessels are exempt from the requirements of the rule, including tankers engaged in coastwise trade, passenger vessels with a ballast water treatment system, Navy and CG vessels and vessels that discharge ballast water at the location where the ballast water originated.

The text of the interim rule can be found on <http://law.house.gov/7.htm>. Questions or comments on the rule may be addressed to Mary Pat McKeown, Project Manager, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Office of Operating and Environmental Standards (G-MSO), telephone 202-267-0500, and should be received before July 16, 1999.

Source of information: Dr Chao Wu through Leo Kirchner (New Jersey office)

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