



Ship Type: All Trade Area: Australia

Bulletin 382 - 10/04 - Disposal of Garbage in Great Barrier Reef Marine Park - Australia

The provisions of Annex V of MARPOL (Disposal of Garbage) are incorporated into Australian law. Members should be aware of the unusual definition of “nearest land” in MARPOL. The “nearest land” baseline off the north eastern coast of Australia is defined as the outer edge of the Great Barrier Reef. As such, all discharges (including discharges of commuted good wastes) are prohibited in the Great Barrier Reef region, even if made more than three nautical miles from actual land.

There have been several recent incidences where the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) <http://www.amsa.gov.au/> has detained ships suspected of discharging garbage and food waste within the prohibited discharge area of the Great Barrier Reef. It should be noted that illegal discharges can result in fines of up to A \$ 1.1 million

Environmental offences are treated very seriously in Australia, particularly in the Great Barrier Reef region, and where AMSA suspects that a breach of the MARPOL regulations has occurred Members can be certain that AMSA will detain the vessel and carry out investigations. Ships will generally not be released from detention until security of at least A\$300,000 is posted.

Members should ensure that no discharges occur at all within the Great Barrier Reef. All vessels must have in place an adequate shipboard waste management plan (including prominent warning signs showing the prohibited area within the Great Barrier Reef) and operators should ensure crews are regularly informed of the proper procedures for disposing of garbage and other waste, particularly when transiting the Great Barrier Reef region. Masters should also ensure that the garbage record book is properly maintained and up-to-date, as AMSA officials routinely inspect such records.

Source of information: via Marcus John, TM Australia
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