



Ship Type: All Trade Area: Australia

Bulletin 182 - 03/01 – New Mandatory Ballast Water Arrangements Effective 1st July 2001 - Australia

The Federal Government is implementing a new mandatory ballast water management regime aimed at reducing the risks associated with importation of invasive marine organisms in ships' ballast water and other vectors. The following is a brief outline of the new arrangements.

As of **1 July 2001**, the current voluntary system will be replaced with a set of mandatory requirements for all ships entering Australian waters.

New Mandatory System:

1. All current mandatory measures will still apply. These include:
 - Compulsory reporting of ballast water management practice
 - Provision of access to safe sampling points
 - Prohibition of sediment discharge in Australian ports or waters.
2. Master of ships must either:
 - a) Exchange ballast water at sea to at least 95 percent volumetric standard (or an equivalent on-board treatment method), or
 - b) Provide details of ballast water uptake and intended discharge, well prior to arrival in Australia, through electronic interaction with the Australian Ballast Water Decision Support System (DSS) (see below).

If assessed by the DSS as 'low risk', after obtaining written permission, the ship can deballast observing any contingency advice from Australian Quarantine officers.

If assessed by the DSS as 'high risk', options for Masters will include:

- a) Exchanging at sea en-route to Australia (or an equivalent on-board treatment method – to be considered on a case by case basis)
 - b) Not discharging tanks with high risk ballast water in Australian waters, or
 - c) Tank to tank transfer to prevent discharge of high risk ballast water.
3. Vessels designated as 'high risk' and that are unable or unwilling to undertake treatment en-route to Australia might not be granted permission to enter port, but will be considered on a case by case basis. Further action by the Master may be required.

(From 'Ballast Water – The international framework and Australia's new management arrangements' by Murray Johns, AFFA, proceedings of 'National Shipping Industry Conference' (8-9 March 2001).

All ships will be required to have written permission from a quarantine officer before discharging ballast water in Australian Waters.

Australian Ballast Water Decision Support System (DSS)

The DSS is a biological risk assessment software package with the capacity to assess the risks posed by individual ships seeking to discharge ballast water in Australian ports.

The assessment will be on a tank-by-tank basis, based on

- information provided by the ship's Master
- the likely existence of harmful species at the last port of call

- the likelihood of species survival of the voyage and
- their entry into Australian ports and
- the risk posed by their arrival.

The steps to be taken are:

1. Ships' Master enters into DSS, all ballast water details for each tank between leaving the last port of call and entering Australian waters
2. DSS performs a risk assessment based on this information and the above criteria, resulting in a 'low' or 'high' risk rating for each tank
3. If rating is 'high', treatment will be required prior to entry into Australian waters, such as exchange at sea
4. If rating is 'low', no treatment will be required.

The system will be fully automated and conducted electronically with the option of a paper-based system. The Quarantine Pre-Arrival Report Pratique (QPAR) will still be required so the ship may receive quarantine clearance.

Alternatives to DSS are:

- Independently perform a full treatment or exchange at sea prior to entering Australian waters
- Undertake not to discharge ballast water in Australian ports or waters
- Enter into a 'Ballast Water Compliance Agreement' with AQIS for ships that meet relevant criteria.

Enforcement

The new arrangements will be enforced under the *Quarantine Act 1908* (Cth) which has recently been amended. Stricter quarantine penalties may now be imposed on non-complying vessels.

Industry awareness sessions

Detailed and comprehensive training will be conducted in May and June for industry representatives and AQIS staff.

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Further details can be found at www.aqis.gov.au/shipping or by contacting the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) on e mail dss@aqis.gov.au or fax +61 2 6272 3276