



Ship Type: All Trade Area: USA

Bulletin 379 - 09/04 - Updated - USCG Rules on Ballast Water Management - USA

Further to [LP Bulletin 372](#) which advised that as of 13th August 2004 the USCG had begun enforcing the US ballast water management regulations, we have been advised further that effective from the 27th September 2004 the USCG will require mandatory ballast water management practices for all ships equipped with ballast water tanks bound for ports, or places, within the US or entering US waters.

This will comply with the requirements of the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 and the National Invasive Species Act of 1996. The Great Lakes Ballast Water Management Program remains unchanged.

This mandatory program requires all ships equipped with ballast water tanks entering US waters, after operating beyond the EEZ, to employ at least one of the following BWM practices:

- 1 Prior to discharging ballast water in US waters, perform complete ballast water exchange in an area no less than 200 nautical miles from any shore; or
- 2 Retain ballast water onboard the ship; or
- 3 Prior to the ship entering US waters, use an alternative environmentally sound method of BWM that has been approved by the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard recognizes that there are two currently feasible methods of conducting an exchange:

- 1 An empty/refill exchange – The tank (or pair of tanks) is pumped down to the point where pumps lose suction, and then the tank is pumped back up to the original level.
- 2 A flow-through exchange – Mid-ocean water is pumped into a full tank while the existing coastal or fresh water is pumped or pushed out through another opening. As defined by the Coast Guard, a volume of water equal to three times the ballast tank capacity must be pumped for a flow-through exchange.

Failure to employ at least one of the BWM practices outlined above will result in a penalty, unless the ship is exempt due to safety or voyage constraints or specifically exempted from the regulation (A foreign ship merely traversing the territorial sea of the US, i.e. not entering or departing a US port, or not navigating the internal waters of the US is exempt from these requirements).

Each ship subject to this Rule (33 CFR part 151 subpart D) will be required to develop and maintain a BWM plan. The plan shall be specific to each ship and shall fulfill two purposes:

- 1 Show that there is a BWM strategy for the ship; and
- 2 Allow any master, or other ship's officer as appropriate, serving on that ship to understand and follow the BWM strategy for the ship.

The IMO has issued guidelines on the content of BWM plans in [IMO Resolution A.868 \(20\) Annex 1, Chapter 7](#). Any plan meeting these IMO guidelines will meet the regulatory requirement laid out in 151.2035(a) (7).

Source of information: Corbett and Holt, LLC / Gallagher Marine Systems Inc
[Corbett and Holt, LLC](#)