

### Annex IV of MARPOL – Commencement of Regulations for Existing Ships

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to remind shipowners, operators and service providers that the international regulations for the prevention of pollution by sewage from ships will apply to “existing ships” from 27 September 2008.

Marine Notice 4 of 2004 advised that the regulations, which are included in Annex IV of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), would enter into force for Australia on 27 May 2004. Since then, the regulations have applied only to “new ships”. New ships in the context of Annex IV are those for which the building contract was placed, or in the absence of a building contract, the keel of which was laid, or was at a similar stage of construction, on or after 27 September 2003.

Under the terms of MARPOL, ships other than “new ships”, commonly referred to as “existing ships”, were given until 27 September 2008 to comply with the new requirements. From this date, Annex IV of MARPOL will apply to the following vessels engaged in international voyages, regardless of the date of construction:

- Ships of 400 gross tonnage and above;
- Ships of less than 400 gross tonnage which are certified to carry more than 15 persons.

Ship owners, operators and service providers of these ships are reminded of the following requirements:

1. Ships are required to be equipped with one of the following sewage systems:
  - (a) A sewage treatment plant that is type approved by an Administration<sup>1</sup> against

the standards and test methods developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO);

- (b) A sewage comminuting and disinfecting system approved by an Administration, fitted with facilities for the temporary storage of sewage when the ship is less than 3 nautical miles from the nearest land; or
- (c) a holding tank:
  - (i) of a capacity adequate for the retention of all sewage, having regard to operation of the ship, the number of persons on board and other relevant factors;
  - (ii) constructed to the satisfaction of the Administration; and
  - (iii) having a means to indicate visually the amount of its contents.

A listing of IMO type approved sewage treatment plants can be obtained by contacting AMSA at [eps@amsa.gov.au](mailto:eps@amsa.gov.au), or from the IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System <http://gis.imo.org/Public/>.

2. Discharges of sewage into the sea are subject to the following requirements:

- Untreated sewage may only be discharged at a distance of more than 12 nautical miles from nearest land, providing that sewage held in holding tanks is not discharged instantaneously, but at a ‘moderate rate’<sup>2</sup> when the ship is proceeding at a speed of not less than 4 knots.

<sup>1</sup>The Administration is the official Party to the Convention in each country. For Australia the Administration is represented by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

<sup>2</sup>The ‘moderate rate’ is defined in IMO Resolution MEPC.157(55) *Recommendation on standards for the rate of discharge of untreated sewage from ships*.



- Comminuted and disinfected sewage may only be discharged at a distance of more than three nautical miles from the nearest land.
  - Effluent from an IMO approved sewage treatment plant may be discharged at any location providing the effluent does not produce visible floating solids or cause discolouration of the surrounding water. Note that there may be more stringent requirements in some Australian ports including no discharge zones and information should be obtained from local authorities.
3. IMO type approved sewage treatment plants must be regularly maintained, tested and surveyed to ensure that they continue to meet the standard that they have been tested against. Ships wishing to use sewage treatment plants in Australian port limits and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park may need to provide evidence to authorities that the system continues to perform at the appropriate standard.<sup>3</sup>

A ship engaged in voyages to ports or offshore terminals outside of Australia's jurisdiction is required to have a valid International Sewage Pollution Prevention Certificate (ISPP). An ISPP will be issued after completion of the initial survey, and is valid for five years.

A renewal survey must ensure that the structure, equipment, systems, fittings and materials fully comply with Annex IV.

Annex IV is implemented in Australia by Part IIIB of the *Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983*, Part IV, Division 12C of the *Navigation Act 1912* and Marine Orders Part 96. As in the other Annexes of MARPOL, special protection is provided for the Great Barrier Reef by defining the term "nearest land" as the outer edge of the Reef.

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<sup>3</sup>Sewage treatment plants are type approved to either IMO Resolution MEPC.2(VI) or MEPC.159(55) as appropriate.