



Marine notice: 11/2022
Supersedes: 09/2017

Biofouling and in-water cleaning

Purpose

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to provide general information to vessel owners, operators, ports and marinas on the Australian biofouling management requirements, the Anti-fouling and in-water cleaning guidelines, the Australian in-water cleaning standards, and the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) *2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species* (the Biofouling Guidelines).

Australian biofouling management requirements

New requirements for managing biofouling on international vessels arriving in Australia began on 15 June 2022.

Operators of all vessels subject to biosecurity control will be required to provide information on how biofouling has been proactively managed prior to arriving in Australian territorial seas.

This information will need to be reported through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's [Maritime Arrivals Reporting System](#) (MARS).

The department will use the information to target vessel interventions. This will allow more efficient use of resources and statutory powers to assess and inspect vessels, and more effective response to unacceptable biosecurity risks associated with biofouling.

Vessel operators will receive less intervention for biofouling if they comply with one of the following 3 accepted biofouling management practices:

1. Implementation of an effective biofouling management plan
2. Hull and niche areas cleaned of all biofouling within 30 days prior to arriving in Australian territory, or

3. Implementation of an alternative biofouling management method pre-approved by the department.

A vessel operator that has not applied one of these 3 accepted biofouling management practices will be subject to further questions and assessment of the biosecurity risk associated with biofouling on the vessel.

Australia will phase in the introduction of the new requirements. From 15 June 2022 to 15 December 2023 an education-first approach will be taken to assist vessels to comply. However, powers under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* will continue to be used to manage any unacceptable biosecurity risks associated with biofouling.

The Australian biofouling management requirements are available at [Managing biofouling in Australia](#). Future updates will be available through the department's [subscription centre](#) (select Import Industry Advice Notices under Import News).

2015 Anti-Fouling and In-Water Cleaning Guidelines for Australia and New Zealand

The 2015 Anti-fouling and in-water cleaning guidelines (2015 Guidelines) provide guidance on best-practice approaches for:

- shore-based application, maintenance, removal and disposal of anti-fouling coatings, and
- in-water cleaning of vessels and movable structures to minimise environmental risk.

The 2015 Guidelines are available on the [Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's website](#).

Persons who wish to undertake in-water cleaning of vessels in Australian jurisdictions should:

- check their obligations under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) as outlined by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- if the EPBC Act is not triggered by the proposed activity, review the general recommendations about in-water cleaning in Commonwealth waters, and
- refer to the [Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's website](#) for further advice and information on seeking permission to undertake in-water cleaning in Commonwealth or State and Territory waters. Relevant State, Territory and Commonwealth jurisdiction contact points are also available on this webpage.

The Australian in-water cleaning standards

Australia is developing Australian in-water cleaning standards that will specify the minimum requirements for in-water cleaning of biofouling from vessels in Australian territorial seas.

The objectives of the standards are to manage the biosecurity and chemical contamination

risks associated with in-water cleaning to a minimum acceptable level and to support consistent regulatory decision-making across Australia.

Regulatory approval is required to undertake in-water cleaning operations within Australian territorial seas. The standards will be used by regulators to assess in-water cleaning activities in their jurisdiction.

The Australian in-water cleaning standards will be finalised and published on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's webpage [Australian in-water cleaning standards](#). These standards will supersede the in-water cleaning guidance in the 2015 Guidelines.

IMO Biofouling Guidelines

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) *2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species* (Biofouling Guidelines) are intended to provide a globally consistent approach to the management of biofouling. This is through providing information on general measures to minimise the risks associated with biofouling for all types of vessels.

The Biofouling Guidelines are currently under review at the IMO with the final report to be completed in 2023. The intent of this review is to improve the uptake and effectiveness of the Biofouling Guidelines.

The Biofouling Guidelines and a copy of Resolution MEPC.207(62) can be obtained from the [IMO website](#).

Further information for managing biofouling and in-water cleaning can be found on the [Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's website](#) or by contacting marinepests@awe.gov.au.