

Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling

Biofouling on ships entering the water of IMO Member States may result in the establishment of invasive aquatic species which may pose threats to human, animal and plant life, economic and cultural activities, and the aquatic environment. The potential for invasive aquatic species transferred through biofouling to cause harm has been recognised by the IMO, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), several UNEP Regional Seas Conventions (e.g., the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Region Environment Program (SPREP).

According to the IMO, 'in adopting the *International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004* (BWM Convention), IMO Member States made a clear commitment to minimising the transfer of invasive aquatic species by shipping'. Studies have shown that biofouling can be a significant vector for the transfer of invasive aquatic species. The Convention entered into force on 8th September 2017.

In 2011 the IMO strengthened its work in this area by adopting Resolution MEPC.207(62) *Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling to Minimise the Transfer of Invasive Species* in July 2011, the aim of which is to provide a globally consistent approach to the management of biofouling. The Guidelines are intended to provide useful recommendations on general measures to minimise the risks associated with biofouling for all types of ships and are directed at IMO Member States, shipmasters, operators and owners, shipbuilders, ship cleaning and maintenance operators, port authorities, ship repair, dry docking and recycling facilities, ship designers, classification societies, anti-fouling paint manufacturers and suppliers and any other interested parties.

According to the IMO, a Member State should determine the extent to which the Guidelines are applied within that particular State.

Members' attention is drawn to the latest notifications from IMO Member States on the control and management of ships' biofouling:

- ◆ [Lloyd's Register, New biofouling requirements for ships calling at Australian ports, issue date 15 January 2024](#)
- ◆ [Bahamas Maritime Authority, Information Notice 08, issue date 30/10/2023](#)

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