

IMO continues work on the Ballast Water Management Convention at MEPC 80

Note: The details of this information note were first issued as a news item on <https://www.imca-int.com/news> in October 2023.

The *International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004* (the BWM Convention) is intended to prevent the spread of harmful aquatic organisms from one region to another and damage to the marine environment from ballast water discharge, by minimising the uptake and subsequent discharge of sediments and organisms.

The Convention entered into force globally on 8 September 2017 and requires signatory Flag States to ensure that ships flagged by them comply with standards and procedures for the management and control of ships' ballast water and sediments by requiring all ships to implement a Ballast Water Management Plan, carry a Ballast Water Record Book, and carry out Ballast Water Management (BWM) procedures to a given standard.



Since entering into force, the IMO has continued to address the issue and work continued at the 80th session of the **Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC)** this summer.

BWM Convention Review Plan

MEPC 80 approved a plan to review the BWM Convention (known as the [Convention Review Plan BWM.2-Circ.79](#)) under the experience building phase associated with the BWM Convention. The Plan includes a list of priority issues to be considered which will guide the comprehensive review of the BWM Convention over the next three years and the corresponding development of a package of amendments to the Convention.

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Adoption of amendments to the BWM Convention

During the session, the MEPC adopted amendments to appendix II of the Annex to the BWM Convention (Form of Ballast Water Record Book) which are expected to enter into force on 1 February 2025.

Implementation of the BWM Convention

The MEPC also discussed several matters relating to the implementation of the BWM Convention, including:

- ◆ Approval of a BWM.2/Circ.80 on Guidance on matters relating to ballast water record-keeping and reporting.
- ◆ Adoption of Resolution MEPC.369(80) on Amendments to Appendix II of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004.
- ◆ Adoption of Resolution MEPC.370(80) on Amendments to the Guidelines for ballast water management and development of Ballast Water Management Plans (G4).
- ◆ Adoption of Resolution MEPC.371(80) on Amendments to the Guidelines for ballast water exchange (G6).
- ◆ Adoption of Resolution MEPC.372(80) on Guidance for the use of electronic record books under the BWM Convention.
- ◆ Approval of draft amendments to regulations A-1 and B-2 of the BWM Convention concerning the use of electronic record books under the Convention with a view to adoption in 2024.
- ◆ Approval of Resolution MEPC.373(80) on 2023 Guidelines for Thermal Waste Treatment Devices (TWTG)
- ◆ Adoption of Resolution MEPC.378(80) on the 2023 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species.'
- ◆ Approval of a unified interpretation to the form of the International Ballast Water Management Certificate (IBWMC) and regulations B-3.5 and B-3.10 of the BWM Convention (BWM.2-Circ.66-rev.5), regarding the "date of construction" for a ship which has undergone a major conversion to implement the BWM Convention.

Further information for Members on the outcomes of MEPC 80 will be developed by IMCA's [MPRA Committee](#) before the end of the year.

Commenting on the Ballast Water Management Convention, **Margaret Fitzgerald**, Head of Legal & Regulatory Affairs at IMCA said:

"The amendments introduced agreed at MEPC 80 are designed to strengthen the Convention in reducing the potential negative impacts of ballast water discharge.

"However not all the issues which were on the table at MEPC 80 were discussed or resolved, including temporary storage of sewage and grey water, so work will continue at MEPC 81 in April 2024.

"IMCA Members will need to be aware of upcoming changes to the IMO's Convention which will introduce new rules for vessels following their implementation. I'll be working with our Marine Policy and Regulatory Affairs Committee to produce further information for members on the topic soon."

Members' attention is drawn to IMCA REG003 '[Introduction to Ballast Water Management](#)' available on our website, as well as IACS's '[Recommendation for conducting commissioning testing of Ballast Water Management Systems](#)'.

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