



INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 171

Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling

Guidance for Bahamas Recognised Organisations, Bahamas Approved Nautical Inspectors, Ship Owners, Managers and Masters

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Bulletin provides guidance on the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimise the transfer of invasive aquatic species, and introduces the Biofouling Record Book.

2. Application

- 2.1. This Bulletin applies to all ships.

3. Introduction

- 3.1. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) adopted Resolution MEPC.207(62) *2011 Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling to Minimise the Transfer of Invasive Aquatic Species* in July 2011 to provide a globally consistent approach to the management of biofouling. The MEPC.207(62) guidelines can be downloaded [here](http://www.imo.org/blast/blastDataHelper.asp?data_id=30766&filename=207(62).pdf)¹.
- 3.2. As noted in the introduction to MEPC.207(62), 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., 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 Environmental Program (SPREP).

¹ [http://www.imo.org/blast/blastDataHelper.asp?data_id=30766&filename=207\(62\).pdf](http://www.imo.org/blast/blastDataHelper.asp?data_id=30766&filename=207(62).pdf)

- 3.3. Studies have shown that biofouling can also be a significant vector for the transfer of invasive aquatic species. Biofouling on ships entering the waters of 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.
- 3.4. All ships have some degree of biofouling, even those which may have been recently cleaned or had a new application of an anti-fouling coating system. Studies have shown that the biofouling process begins within the first few hours of a ship's immersion in water. The biofouling that may be found on a ship is influenced by a range of factors, such as:
- i. design and construction, particularly the number, location and design of niche areas;
 - ii. specific operating profile, including factors such as operating speeds, ratio of time underway compared with time alongside, moored or at anchor, and where the ship is located when not in use (e.g., open anchorage or estuarine port);
 - iii. places visited and trading routes; and
 - iv. maintenance history, including: the type, age and condition of any anti-fouling coating system, installation and operation of anti-fouling systems and dry-docking/slipping and hull cleaning practices.
- 3.5. Implementing practices to control and manage biofouling can greatly assist in reducing the risk of the transfer of invasive aquatic species. Such management practices can also improve a ship's hydrodynamic performance and can be effective tools in enhancing energy efficiency and reducing air emissions from ships.
- 3.6. The BMA encourages Companies² operating ships registered in The Bahamas to familiarise themselves with the content of MEPC.207(62) and apply the guidelines to their ships.

4. Biofouling Record Book

- 4.1. In order to record details of hull inspections and biofouling management measures undertaken on ships, the BMA has produced a Biofouling Record Book, in the format specified in MEPC.207(62).

² The "Company" is the entity responsible for the management of the ship in accordance with the ISM Code. For ships to which the ISM Code is not applicable, the Company is the Managing Owner in accordance with Section 52 of the Bahamas Merchant Shipping Act

4.1.1. The Biofouling Record Book is available to order from the BMA Publications section – see [BMA Information Bulletin No.152](#)³ for ordering details.

5. Specific Regional Requirements

5.1. Certain regions have specific requirements relating to the control of biofouling. There may be penalties for ships which are considered to have excessive biofouling or that do not comply with local requirements. Heavily fouled ships may be refused entry.

5.2. Companies operating ships in such regions should ensure that they comply with any specific regional requirements.

5.3. Where the BMA is aware of specific regional requirements, these are summarised below.

5.4. CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

5.4.1. The California State Lands Commission (SLC) regulates biofouling aboard all vessels of 300 gross registered tons or more arriving at California ports which carry, or are capable of carrying, ballast water.

5.4.2. **Reporting requirements:** From 01 October 2017, ships should submit SLC's "Marine Invasive Species Program Annual Vessel Reporting Form," (SLC 600.12, Revised 08/17) at least 24 hours in advance of a ship's first arrival at any California port each calendar year. The form can be downloaded by clicking [here](#)⁴.

5.4.3. **Recordkeeping & Management requirements:** For existing ships, the requirements apply after the first dry-docking on or after 01 January 2018. The requirements also apply to new ships delivered on or after 01 January 2018.

- i. Recordkeeping Requirements. The following records must be made available for the SLC's inspection and review upon request. Ships that do not maintain records consistent with the Biofouling Regulations' requirements, will have a 60-day "grace period" to develop compliant records.
- **Biofouling Management Plan.** The Biofouling Regulations incorporate by reference MEPC.207(62). Ships must have onboard a written biofouling management plan that is at least consistent with

³ <http://www.bahamasmaritime.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/152-Publications-Rev2.pdf>

⁴ http://www.slc.ca.gov/Forms/MISP/Annual_Vessel_Reporting_Form.pdf

MEPC.207(62) and which addresses certain information depending on the biofouling management practice employed by the ship (e.g., anti-fouling coatings, anodes, injections systems, or electrolysis).

- **Biofouling Record Book.** Ships must have onboard a biofouling record book that is at least consistent with the format specified in MEPC.207(62) and which contains details of all inspections and biofouling management measures undertaken on the ship since its most recent dry docking, or since the beginning of a newly-delivered ship's service.

5.4.4. **Mandatory biofouling management requirements.** Anti-fouling coatings must not be aged beyond their effective lifespan. Ships that do not have anti-fouling coatings must demonstrate how they have adhered to their Biofouling Management Plan. With respect to niche areas, the anti-fouling practices used by a ship should be listed in its Biofouling Management Plan. There are additional requirements for vessels remaining in any port for 45 days or more. All instances of biofouling management must be recorded in a vessel's Biofouling Record Book. Furthermore, the Biofouling Regulations expressly prohibit propeller cleaning in California.

5.4.5. Full details of the Californian regulations are available [here](#)⁵.

5.5. **NEW ZEALAND**

5.5.1. The New Zealand government has released biosecurity requirements for all incoming vessels, which come into force in May 2018.

5.5.2. Ships will be required to have a clean hull when arriving in New Zealand. For most vessels 'clean' means no biofouling apart from a slime layer, but for fast turnaround vessels, that only visit the official ports of arrival, allowance is given for a slight amount of biofouling.

5.5.3. Most commercial shipping is expected to be able to obtain clearance into New Zealand, in regard to biofouling, by following current best practice in biofouling management (such as the examples given in MEPC.207(62)) and carrying evidence of this on board for possible verification by border inspectors.

5.5.4. Compliance with MEPC.207(62) will be considered as compliance with New Zealand's requirements.

⁵ http://www.slc.ca.gov/Laws-Regs/Article4.8/Prop_Reg_Txt_Rev_Jan17.pdf

5.5.5. Further information on New Zealand's requirements is available [here](#)⁶.

6. Revision History

Rev.0 (13 November 2017) – First issue

⁶ <http://www.customs.govt.nz/news/resources/Documents/NZs-new-biofouling-requirements.pdf>