

3 January 2013

MARPOL Annex V - Revised garbage disposal regulations

Amendments to MARPOL Annex V, which sets out the regulations for the prevention of pollution by garbage from ships, entered into force on 1 January 2013 and practically all discharges of waste into the sea are now prohibited. The new regulations apply to all ships as well as to fixed and floating offshore installations. The full text of the regulations can be found [here](#) (MEPC.201(62)).

The purpose of this alert is to remind Gard's Members that compliance with the current garbage disposal requirements entails that crew must be properly trained and be familiar with the requirements; a revised Garbage Management Plan is implemented on board; placards on board are renewed so as to display valid garbage disposal requirements; and the Garbage Record Book is maintained and up to date.

Crew competence:

It is important that the crew is familiar with the new garbage disposal requirements as the amended regulations now prohibit the discharge of almost any kind of garbage at sea. Only under certain conditions are discharges of food wastes, cargo residues, animal carcasses, and cleaning agents and additives contained in wash water from cargo holds, decks and external surfaces of the ship permitted and the crew must have a clear understanding of the conditions permitting certain discharges. IMO's [simplified overview](#) of new restrictions and discharge provisions may be used as a quick reference guide for this purpose. We also refer to IMO's "[2012 Guidelines for the implementation of MARPOL Annex V](#)" (MEPC.219(63)) for more detailed assistance and advice.

The crew must pay particular attention to the requirements applicable to discharges into the sea of cargo residues and cleaning agents and additives. Such discharges are permitted in accordance with the regulations only if they do not contain substances that are harmful to the marine environment. It is important to ensure that ship's records contain relevant documentation to evidence this fact:

- cleaning agents and additives not harmful to the environment should be delivered to the vessel with a dated and signed statement to this effect from the supplier of the product,ⁱ and
- solid bulk cargoes should be classified and declared by the shipper, as part of the declaration required in section 4.2 of the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes Code (IMSBC Code), whether they are harmful to the marine environment or not.ⁱⁱ

Garbage Management Plan:

The requirement for a garbage management plan applies to all ships of 100 gross tonnes (GT) and above, as opposed to previously 400 GT and above. All fixed and floating platforms are also required to have garbage management plans. The garbage management plan requirement for ships certified to carry 15 persons or more remains the same. IMO's "[2012 Guidelines for the development of garbage management plans](#)" (MEPC.220(63)) should be consulted during the development and updating of such plans. Ship-specific garbage minimisation procedures should be focused as a means to limit the amount of material brought on board the ship that may become garbage at a later stage.

Placards:

Previously only ships 12 metres or more in length overall were obliged to display placards advising crew and passengers of the MARPOL Annex V garbage disposal requirements. This has now been extended to include fixed and floating platforms. All the required placards must be up to date and state the relevant prohibition and restrictions for discharging garbage from ships and platforms under the revised MARPOL Annex V.

Garbage Record Book:

The requirement for a garbage record book to be maintained by ships of 400 GT and above, ships certified to carry 15 person or more and fixed and floating platforms remains the same. The entries in the Garbage Record Book must, however, be adapted to the new requirements.

Gard's Members and clients should ensure that all ships are in compliance with the new provisions in the revised MARPOL Annex V. It is recommended that ships use port reception facilities as the primary means of garbage disposal. However, if disposal of garbage at sea is undertaken in accordance with the regulations, it should be dispersed over the largest possible sea area and in the deepest water. Any currents or tidal streams should also be taken into account when planning such a discharge.

Given that some ports may not be able to receive and process all types of waste, it is of the utmost importance to check the garbage processing capability of a port prior to arrival. Any experiences of inadequate port reception facilities could be reported to the Administration of the Flag State using the IMO's "[Revised consolidated format for reporting alleged inadequacies of port reception facilities](#)" (MEPC.1/Circ.469/Rev.1) if considered relevant.

ⁱ A cleaning agent or additive is considered not harmful to the marine environment if it is not a "harmful substance" in accordance with the criteria in MARPOL Annex III; and does not contain any components which are known to be carcinogenic, mutagenic or reprotoxic, see MEPC.219(63) paragraph 1.7.5.

ⁱⁱ Cargo residues are considered harmful to the marine environment if they are residues of solid bulk substances which are classified according to the criteria of the United Nations Globally Harmonized System for Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, see MEPC.219(63) paragraph 3.2. IMO has, however, recognized that the toxicity data needed to classify a solid bulk cargo as "harmful to the marine environment" in accordance with some of the specified criteria may not be available from 1 January 2013 and therefore allow for a provisional classification of solid bulk cargoes between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2014, see [IMO's MEPC.1/Circ.791](#) for details.