Maritime & Coastguard Agency

MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE

MSN 1908 (M+F)
The Merchant Shipping (Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments) Regulation 2022

Notice to all Ship Operators and Managers, Charterers, Masters and Officers of Merchant Ships, Skippers of Fishing Vessels, Shipbuilders, Port Authorities, Operators of Fixed and Floating Platforms and Drilling Rigs and Classification Societies.

This notice should be read with the Merchant Shipping (Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments) Regulations 2022, Merchant Shipping (Marine Equipment) Regulations 2025, Merchant Shipping Notice (MSN) 1874 Amendment 11 and Marine Guidance Note (MGN) 675.

Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances – for example, from ship to ship and you should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.

Summary

The Merchant Shipping (Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments) Regulations 2022 ("the Regulations"), implement the requirements of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 ("BWM Convention").

This Notice is given statutory force by the Regulations and should be read in conjunction with the Regulations, Merchant Shipping (Marine Equipment) Regulations 2025, Merchant Shipping Notice (MSN) 1874 Amendment 11 and MGN 675. This Notice provides the detailed technical requirements of the obligations contained in the Regulations. It covers:

- The meaning of "IOPP renewal survey" in regulation 5 of the Regulations;
- The guidelines that must be taken into account when providing ballast water reception facilities;

- The guidelines Certifying Authorities must take into account when considering whether to approve a ballast water management plan;
- The information which must be included in a ballast water management plan;
- The information which must be recorded in ballast water record books, and the operations which must be recorded;
- Further information on ballast water exchange;
- Information on commissioning testing requirements;
- The guidelines that must be taken into account when providing sediment reception facilities;
- The procedure and requirements for type approval of Ballast Water Management Systems;
- The information which must be contained in an IBWM Certificate.

This notice has been updated with the following:

- An updated ballast water record book in Schedule 1.
- An updated section on the ballast water record book.
- An updated section on ballast water exchange.
- AN updated section on ballast water exchange in the North Sea.

1. Introduction

1.1 The International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 ("BWM Convention") was adopted at a Diplomatic Conference held at the International Maritime Organization's ("IMO") headquarters in 2004 and came into force on 8 September 2017. It sets out regulations which address the spread of invasive non-native species by ships' ballast water and sediments.

1.2 The Merchant Shipping (Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments) Regulations 2022 ("the Regulations") came into force on 29 July 2022. They implement the BWM Convention and the Code for Approval of Ballast Water Management Systems[1] ("BWMS Code").

1.3 The purpose of this document is to provide the detailed technical requirements of the obligations contained in the Regulations.

2. The International Oil Pollution Prevention Certificate (IOPP) Renewal Survey

2.1 For many ships the date by which they are required to manage ballast water through treatment is based upon the renewal date on the ships' IOPP Certificate. [2]

2.2 The "IOPP renewal survey" referred to in regulation 5 of the Regulations means the renewal survey for the ship associated with the International Oil Pollution Prevention

[1] This Code was published as Annex 5 to IMO Resolution MEPC.300(72) adopted on 13 April 2018. IMO Resolutions are available from the IMO Library of 4 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SR.
[2] The exceptions are vessels which are constructed on or after 8 September 2017 which may only undertake treatment, and ships which are not subject to an IOPP renewal survey, which may undertake exchange or treatment until 8 September 2024, after which they may only undertake treatment.

certificate pursuant to Annex I to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL).[3]

3. Ballast Water Reception Facilities

3.1 Regulation 6 provides that the Regulations do not apply to the discharge of ballast water to a reception facility of a type specified in this MSN. Specified facilities are those which have been designed taking into account the IMO's "Guidelines for ballast water reception facilities (G5)" published in MEPC.153(55).

4. Ballast Water Management Plan

4.1 Every ship to which the Regulations apply must carry on board a ballast water management plan specific to the ship which has been approved by the flag state or, if a UK flagged ship, approved by a Certifying Authority, as detailed in regulation 9.

4.2 When considering whether to approve a ballast water management plan, Certifying Authorities must take into account the IMO's "Guidelines for ballast water management and development of ballast water management plans (G4)" published in IMO Resolution MEPC.127(53).

4.3 In accordance with Regulation 9, the ballast water management plan must include the following:

- Safety procedures for the ship and the crew for the operation of ballast water management, A detailed description of the actions to be taken to implement the requirements of the Regulations or where a ship is not a United Kingdom ship, the Convention, including the procedures for discharge of sediments at sea and to shore,
- The procedures for coordinating ballast water management which involves discharge of any ballast water or sediments into the sea with the authorities of the State into whose waters the discharge is to take place,
- Details of the officer on board in charge of ensuring that the ballast water management plan is properly implemented, and
- The reporting requirements in regulation 31(3) and (4) (responsibilities of the owner and the master) or, where a ship is not a United Kingdom ship, Regulation E-1.7 of the BWM Convention.

5. Ballast Water Record Book

5.1 This section has been updated in line with amendments to the BWM Convention contained in IMO Resolution MEPC.369(80). These changes enter into force internationally on 1 February 2025 and are therefore a mandatory requirement from that date.

[3] MARPOL was published in Cmnd. 5748, and amended by the Protocols of 1978 (Cmnd. 7347) and 1997 (Cm. 4427). Hard copies of the Command Papers are available for inspection free of charge but by appointment at the Parliamentary Archives, Houses of Parliament, London SW1A 0PW. The Parliamentary Archives catalogue numbers are as follows: HL/PO/JO/10/11/1853/505 (Cmnd. 5748), HL/PO/JO/10/11/1959/2033 (Cmnd. 7347) and HL/PO/JO/10/11/3156/2285 (Cm. 4427). MARPOL is available from IMO Publishing, 4 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7SR. Annex I was revised and replaced by IMO Resolution MEPC.117(52). It is further amended and supplemented by a number of IMO Resolutions which are available from the IMO Library of 4 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SR.

5.2 Regulation 10(1) requires ships to have on board a ballast water record book which contains the information specified in this MSN. The information it should contain is set out in Appendix II to the BWM Convention and is reproduced in Schedule 1 of this MSN.

5.3 The Regulations impose a duty to fully record each operation referred to in this MSN. The operations which must be recorded are those set out in Schedule 1, in summary:

- When ballast water is taken on board from the aquatic environment (ballasting operation)
- When ballast water is discharged into the aquatic environment (deballasting operation)
- Whenever ballast water is exchanged, treated through internal circulation or treated in tank
- Uptake or discharge of ballast water from/to a port-based or reception facility
- Accidental discharge/ingress or other exceptional uptake or discharge of ballast water
- Failures and inoperabilities of the ballast water management system
- Ballast tank cleaning/flushing, removal and disposal of sediments
- Additional operational procedures and general remarks.

5.4 As set out in Appendix II to the BWM Convention, the volume of ballast water onboard should be estimated in cubic metres and it is recognised that the accuracy of estimating volumes of ballast is left to interpretation.

5.5 Where a ship wishes to resume a period of exclusive operations within UK waters then they should follow IMO guidance BWM.2/Circ.52.

6. Ballast Water Exchange

6.1 In accordance with Regulation 5, all ships to which the Regulations apply have to meet the D2 standard.

6.2 The IMO has issued the following guidance which may apply: “Interim guidance on the application of the BWM Convention to ships operating in challenging water quality conditions” (published in IMO Resolution MEPC.387(81)) and “Guidance on contingency measures under the BWM Convention” (published in IMO Circular BWM.2/Circ.62).

6.3 As set out in Appendix II to the BWM Convention, the volume of ballast water onboard should be estimated in cubic metres and it is recognised that the accuracy of estimating volumes of ballast water is left to interpretation. Ballast water exchange in accordance with regulation 11(1) and 11(2) must take into account the IMO’s “2017 Guidelines for ballast water exchange (G6)” published in IMO Resolution MEPC.288(71).

7. Ballast Water Exchange within the North Sea

7.1 The Secretary of State may designate areas of sea in which ships may conduct ballast water exchange (regulation 11). These areas will be designated in accordance with the IMO’s “Guidelines on designation of areas for ballast water exchange (G14)” published in IMO Resolution MEPC.151(55).

7.2 Please note that the North Sea ballast water exchange area terminated on 8th September 2024 as per BWM.2/Circ.56.

7.3 Relevant member states are working to establish an intra-North Sea contingency area which will be publicised once agreed.

7.4 Operators are advised to contact relevant Port States to ensure compliance with local and national legislation. For further information please email environment@mcga.gov.uk.

7.5 Same location (Regulation 6(1)(d)(ii) and 6(2)) may assist in situations of challenging water where ballast water exchange is normally used if the ship can meet the requirements of same location.

8. International Ballast Water Management Certificate (IBWM Certificate)

8.1 The information that must be contained in the IBWM Certificate is shown in Schedule 2 of this MSN.

9. Commissioning Testing Requirements

9.1 The purpose of commissioning testing is to validate the installation of a ballast water management system (BWMS) by demonstrating that its mechanical, physical, chemical and biological processes are working properly.

9.2 Commissioning testing must be undertaken following the installation of a BWMS on board a ship. This will be confirmed during initial or additional surveys as provided for in regulations 26 and 32.

9.3 Commissioning testing must take into account the IMO's "Guidance for the commissioning testing of ballast water management systems" (BWM.2/Circ.70/Rev.1).

10. Exemptions

10.1 The UK is accepting exemption applications.

10.2 As provided for in regulation 7 of the Regulations, a ship can apply for an exemption providing it meets the necessary criteria.

10.3 Ships wishing to apply for an exemption in UK waters or UK controlled waters should follow the approach detailed in the Joint Harmonised Procedure for the Contracting Parties of HELCOM and OSPAR on the granting of exemptions under the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, Regulation A-4 (OSPAR Agreement 2015-01). This takes into account the IMO's "Guidelines for risk assessment under regulation A-4 of the BWM Convention (G7)" published in IMO Resolution MEPC.289(71) and consolidates it into one process to ensure uniformity across the relevant member states. This document can be accessed here; https://www.ospar.org/documents?v=44007.

10.4 This sets out a common risk assessment and monitoring approach for the granting of exemptions to ships under the BWM Convention, with the aim of minimising the risk to the environment.

10.5 Ships wishing to apply for an exemption in UK waters or UK controlled waters should contact the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) via email to environment@mcga.gov.uk for details regarding the application process.

10.6 The particulars of any exemption granted to a ship must be recorded in the ballast water record book (regulation 7(5)).

11. Sediment Reception Facilities

11.1 Sediment reception facilities which are required by regulation 14 must be designated and operated in accordance with the IMO's "Guidelines for sediment reception facilities (G1)" published in IMO Resolution MEPC.152(55).

12. Ballast Water Management System Type Approval Requirements

Scope of Approval

12.1 BWMS are within the scope of the Merchant Shipping (Marine Equipment) Regulations 2025 and require approval by the MCA as the Flag Administration for UK ships. Pursuant to MSN 1874 amendment 11, BWMS installed on UK ships must be type approved by the UK Nominated Bodies to whom the MCA has delegated responsibility for this.

Requirements for Equipment

12.2 BWMS installed on a UK ship must hold a valid BWMS Type Approval Certificate issued by a Nominated Body at the time when that equipment is installed.

12.3 BWMS which are installed on board a ship during the period of validity of a relevant BWMS Type Approval Certificate do not need to be renewed or replaced due to the expiration of the Certificate. However, if the system does not need to be replaced then it must be replaced with a system for which a current Type Approval Certificate is in force.

13. Further Information

13.1 Additional guidance relating to the UK implementation of the BWM Convention is available in MGN 675.

Schedule 1

FORM OF BALLAST WATER RECORD BOOK

BALLAST WATER RECORD BOOK

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF SHIPS' BALLAST WATER AND SEDIMENTS

Name of ship: ……..

IMO number, distinctive numbers or letters: ……..

Gross tonnage: ……

Flag: ……...

Total ballast water capacity (in cubic metres): ……

Number of the International Ballast Water Management Certificate: ……..

Period From: ……. To: ……...

A diagram identifying the ballast tanks of the ship, corresponding to the Ballast Water Management Plan, including any multi-use tank, space or compartment designed to allow carriage of ballast water, is integral to and shall be a part of this Ballast Water Record Book.

Introduction

In accordance with regulation B-2 of the annex to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, a record is to be kept of each ballast
water operation. This includes discharges at sea and to reception facilities.

"Ballast water" means water with its suspended matter taken on board a ship to control trim, list, draught, stability, or stresses of a ship. Management of ballast water shall be in accordance with an approved Ballast Water Management Plan and take into account guidelines developed by the Organization.

The Ballast Water Record Book entries should be completed, taking into account any guidelines to be developed by the Organization.

The volume of ballast water on board should be estimated in cubic metres. It is recognized that the accuracy of estimating volumes of ballast is left to interpretation.

ENTRIES IN THE BALLAST WATER RECORD BOOK

Entries in the Ballast Water Record Book shall be made on each of the following occasions:

(A) When ballast water is taken on board from the aquatic environment (ballasting operation)

.1 Start time and location (port of uptake or latitude/longitude)

.2 Completion time and location (port of uptake or latitude/longitude and minimum depth of water during uptake)

.3 The identity of the tanks affected

.4 Estimated volume of uptake and final total quantity retained in cubic metres

.5 Whether conducted in accordance with the approved Ballast Water Management Plan

.6 Ballast water treatment method

(B) When ballast water is discharged into the aquatic environment (deballasting operation)

.1 Start time and location (port of discharge or latitude/longitude)

.2 Completion time and location (port of discharge or latitude/longitude and minimum depth of water during discharge)

.3 The identity of the tanks affected

.4 Estimated volume of discharge and final total quantity retained in cubic metres

.5 Whether conducted in accordance with the approved Ballast Water Management Plan

.6 Ballast water treatment method

(C) Whenever ballast water is exchanged, treated through internal circulation or treated in tank

1 Ballast water exchange

.1 Start time and location (latitude/longitude)

.2 Completion time and location (latitude/longitude)

.3 Minimum distance from the nearest land and minimum depth of water during the exchange or, if applicable, identify the designated exchange area in accordance with regulation B-4.2

.4 Whether conducted in accordance with the Ballast Water Management Plan and state the ballast water exchange method (Sequential or Flow-through or Dilution) used

.5 The identity of the tanks affected

.6 Total quantity exchanged and final total quantity on board in cubic metres

.7 Treatment method for the incoming ballast water

2 Ballast water internal circulation for treatment or in-tank treatment

.1 Start time

.2 Completion time

.3 The identity of the tanks affected (identifying source and destination tanks, if applicable)

.4 Total quantity treated (through circulation or in tank) in cubic metres

.5 Ballast water treatment method

(D) Uptake or discharge of ballast water from/to a port-based or reception facility

.1 Start time and location of uptake/discharge (state facility name)

.2 Completion time

.3 Operation carried out (whether uptake or discharge)

.4 The identity of the tanks affected

.5 Total quantity in cubic metres and final quantity retained on board

.6 Whether conducted in accordance with the approved Ballast Water Management Plan

.7 Onboard ballast water treatment method

(E) Accidental discharge/ingress or other exceptional uptake or discharge of ballast water

.1 Start time and location of ingress/uptake/discharge (port name or latitude/longitude)

.2 Completion time

.3 Operation carried out (whether ingress, uptake or discharge)

.4 The identity of the tanks affected

.5 Total quantity of ballast water in cubic metres

.6 State the circumstances of ingress, uptake, discharge or loss, the reason thereof, any treatment method used and general remarks

(F) Failures and inoperabilities* of the ballast water management system

.1 Time and location (port name or latitude/longitude) of failure of the ballast water management system

.2 Operation carried out (state whether uptake or discharge)

.3 Description of the issue (e.g. kind of alarm or other description of circumstances)

.4 Time and location (port name or latitude/longitude) when the ballast water management system has been made operational

(G) Ballast tank cleaning/flushing, removal and disposal of sediments

.1 Time and ship's location on commencement of ballast tank cleaning/flushing, removal or disposal of sediments (port name or latitude/longitude)

.2 Time and ship's location on completion of ballast tank cleaning/flushing, removal or disposal of sediments (port name or latitude/longitude)

.3 Tank(s) identification (name of the ballast tanks as per the Ballast Water Management Plan)

.4 Discharge or disposal to a reception facility (state quantity in cubic metres and name of the facility)

.5 Disposal or discharge to the aquatic environment as per Ballast Water Management Plan (state quantity in cubic metres, minimum distance from the nearest land in nm and minimum depth of water in metres)

*Failures and inoperabilities include malfunctions, shutdowns or critical alarms indicating a failure of the ballast water management system which may indicate non-compliance with the D-2 standard (except routine information and warnings).

(H) Additional operational procedures and general remarks Sample Ballast Water Record Book Page

Sample Ballast Water Record Book Page

Name of ship: ……

IMO number, distinctive numbers or letters: ……

Date	Code (letter)	Item (number)	Record of operations/ signature of officer in charge

Signature of the master

……

Schedule 2

FORM OF INTERNATIONAL BALLAST WATER MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE

The IBWM Certificate in this Schedule refers to regulations in the Annex to the Convention. This table provides the equivalent provisions in the UK Regulations.

Reference to the Convention	**Equivalent in the UK Regulations**
Regulation D-1	Regulation 12
Regulation D-2	Regulation 13
Regulation D-4	Regulation 21
Regulation E-1	Part 6 of the Regulations
Regulation E-5.8.3	Regulation 27(3)
Regulation E-5.3	Regulation 29(1)(a)
Regulation E-5.4	Regulation 30
Regulation E-5.5	Regulation 29(1)(b)
Regulation E-5.6	Regulation 29(3)
Regulation 5.8	Regulation 27(2) and (3)

This text and the text and table above are not required to be included in an IBWM Certificate.

INTERNATIONAL BALLAST WATER MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE

Issued under the provisions of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (hereinafter referred to as "the Convention") under the authority of the Government of

……

(full designation of the country)

by ……

(full designation of the competent person or organization authorized under the provisions of the Convention)

Particulars of ship[15]

Name of ship .....

Distinctive number or letters .....

Port of registry .....

Gross Tonnage .....

IMO number[16] .....
Date of Construction ……
Ballast Water Capacity (in cubic metres) .....

Details of Ballast Water Management Method(s) Used
Method of Ballast Water Management used ……..
Date installed (if applicable) .....
Name of manufacturer (if applicable) .....

The principal Ballast Water Management method(s) employed on this ship is/are:

in accordance with regulation D-1

in accordance with regulation D-2 (describe) .....

the ship is subject to regulation D-4

other approach in accordance with regulation ……

THIS IS TO CERTIFY:
1 That the ship has been surveyed in accordance with regulation E-1 of the Annex to the Convention; and
2 That the survey shows that Ballast Water Management on the ship complies with the Annex to the Convention.
This certificate is valid until …… subject to surveys in accordance with regulation E-1 of the Annex to the Convention.
Completion date of the survey on which this certificate is based: dd/mm/yyyy
Issued at .....
(Place of issue of certificate)

....
(Date of issue) (Signature of authorized official issuing the certificate)

(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

ENDORSEMENT FOR ANNUAL AND INTERMEDIATE SURVEY(S)
THIS IS TO CERTIFY that at a survey required by regulation E-1 of the Annex to the Convention the ship was found to comply with the relevant provisions of the Convention:
Annual survey: Signed .....
(Signature of duly authorized official)

Place .....

Date.....
(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

Annual*[17]/Intermediate survey*: Signed .....
(Signature of duly authorized official)

Place .....

Date.....
(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

Annual*/Intermediate survey*: Signed .....
(Signature of duly authorized official)

Place .....

Date.....
(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

Annual survey: Signed .....
(Signature of duly authorized official)

Place .....

Date.....
(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

ANNUAL/INTERMEDIATE SURVEY
IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATION E-5.8.3

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that, at an annual/intermediate* survey in accordance with regulation E-5.8.3 of the Annex to the Convention, the ship was found to comply with the relevant provisions of the Convention:

Signed .....
(Signature of duly authorized official)

Place .....

Date.....
(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

ENDORSEMENT TO EXTEND THE CERTIFICATE IF VALID FOR LESS THAN 5 YEARS WHERE REGULATION E-5.3 APPLIES

The ship complies with the relevant provisions of the Convention, and this Certificate shall, in accordance with regulation E-5.3 of the Annex to the Convention, be accepted as valid until……

Signed .....
(Signature of duly authorized official)

Place .....

Date.....
(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

ENDORSEMENT WHERE THE RENEWAL SURVEY HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND REGULATION E-5.4 APPLIES

The ship complies with the relevant provisions of the Convention and this Certificate shall, in accordance with regulation E-5.4 of the Annex to the Convention, be accepted as valid until ……

Signed .....
(Signature of duly authorized official)

Place .....

Date.....
(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

ENDORSEMENT TO EXTEND THE VALIDITY OF THE CERTIFICATE UNTIL REACHING THE PORT OF SURVEY OR FOR A PERIOD OF GRACE WHERE REGULATION E-5.5 OR E-5.6 APPLIES

This Certificate shall, in accordance with regulation E-5.5 or E-5.6* of the Annex to the Convention, be accepted as valid until ……..

Signed .....
(Signature of duly authorized official)

Place .....

Date.....
(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

ENDORSEMENT FOR ADVANCEMENT OF ANNIVERSARY DATE WHERE REGULATION E-5.8 APPLIES

In accordance with regulation E-5.8 of the Annex to the Convention the new Anniversary date is ……..

Signed .....
(Signature of duly authorized official)

Place .....

Date.....
(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

In accordance with regulation E-5.8 of the Annex to the Convention the new Anniversary date is ……..

Signed .....
(Signature of duly authorized official)

Place .....

Date.....
(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

More information

Clean Ship Operations
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Bay 2/23
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Telephone: +44 (0)203 81 85139

Email: environment@mcga.gov.uk

Website: www.gov.uk/mca

Please note that all addresses and telephone numbers are correct at time of publishing.

Published: XX 2025