

TECHNICAL AND REGULATORY NEWS No. 18/2017 – Statutory

BALTIC SEA – FIRST MARPOL SPECIAL AREA FOR SEWAGE

Relevant for shipyards, design offices and owners/managers of passenger ships, cruise ships or ferries.

September 2017

Considering the availability of reception facilities, the MEPC agreed at its 69th session on the dates for the Baltic Sea special area to take effect. This will impact sewage management for passenger¹ ships when operating in the Baltic Sea.



Courtesy from Scanship

The Baltic Sea special area will take effect as follows:

- 1 June 2019 for new² passenger ships
- 1 June 2021 for existing³ passenger ships
- 1 June 2023 for existing passenger ships en route between a port outside the special area and a port located east of 028°10'E⁴

As of these dates, passenger ships may no longer discharge untreated sewage into the Baltic Sea. In order to discharge treated sewage, a treatment plant type approved and meeting the standard of Resolution MEPC.227(64)⁵ will be required. The alternative is a sewage holding tank with sufficient capacity. Any coastal state bordering a special area

is committed to provide adequate facilities for the reception of sewage in ports used by passenger ships without causing undue delay to the ship.

In addition to setting the dates for when the Baltic Sea special area shall take effect, the MARPOL amendments which entered into force on 1 September 2017 defines a "new passenger ship" as a passenger ship contracted on or after 1 June 2019 or delivery of which is on or after 1 June 2021. Amendments have also been done to the ISPP Certificate form to include two options for the MEPC.227(64) type approval standard, with and without section 4.2 (nitrogen and phosphorus removal standard), as section 4.2 is only applicable to passenger ships.

Standards for sewage treatment plants:

The different IMO type approval standards for sewage treatment plants apply as follows:

MEPC.2(VI) - Sewage treatment plants installed on ships prior to 1 January 2010

MEPC.159(55) - Sewage treatment plants installed on ships prior to 1 January 2016 and on or after 1 January 2010

MEPC.227(64), excluding the standards of section 4.2⁶ - Sewage treatment plants installed on ships on or after 1 January 2016

MEPC.227(64) - Sewage treatment plants installed on passenger ships intending to discharge treated sewage in a MARPOL Annex IV special area after the effective date of the special area

A sewage treatment plant is only mandatory by MARPOL if discharging sewage within 12 nm from the nearest land and within a special area for passenger ships. Local discharge requirements may still apply even for grey water and treated sewage in some areas.

Recommendations

For a passenger ship, this means that prior to entering the Baltic Sea after the relevant effective date, the different alternatives for compliance should be carefully considered, including upgrading to a treatment plant according to MEPC.227(64).

References

- MEPC.274(69) - Amendments to MARPOL Annex IV
- MEPC.275(69) - The date on which the Baltic Sea special area shall take effect
- MEPC.284(70) - Amendments to the MEPC.227(64) guidelines

CONTACT

For customers:

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¹ A ship which carries more than twelve passengers

² Building contract placed on or after 1 June 2019 or delivered after 1 June 2021

³ A passenger ship which is not a new passenger ship

⁴ Russian part of the Gulf of Finland

⁵ 2012 Guidelines on the implementation of effluent standards and performance tests for sewage treatment plants

⁶ Additional standard for nitrogen and phosphorous removal