



Marine Notice 9/2017
Supersedes 19/2013

Biofouling and In-water Cleaning

Purpose

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to provide general information to vessel owners, operators, ports and marinas on the revised 2015 *Anti-fouling and In-water Cleaning Guidelines* for Australia and New Zealand (the 2015 Guidelines), and the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) *2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species* (the Biofouling Guidelines).

2015 Anti-Fouling and In-Water Cleaning Guidelines for Australia and New Zealand

The 2015 Guidelines provide guidance on best-practice approaches for:

- shore-based application, maintenance, removal and disposal of anti-fouling coatings; and
- in-water cleaning of vessels and movable structures to minimise environmental risk.

The 2015 Guidelines are available on the [Department of Agriculture and Water Resources'](#) website.

In-water cleaning can result in the release of invasive aquatic pests to the surrounding environment. It can also physically damage some anti-fouling coatings, shorten coating service life and release a pulse of biocides.

The 2015 Guidelines recommend that vessels and moveable structures be removed from the water prior to cleaning. Where this is not operationally practicable, in-water cleaning may be accepted as a potential management option for removing biofouling, provided that biosecurity and contaminant risks are appropriately managed in accordance with the 2015 Guidelines.

Persons who wish to in-water clean vessels in Australian jurisdictions should:

- check their obligations under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) as outlined by the [Department of Environment and Energy](#).
- if the EPBC Act is not triggered by the proposed activity, review the [general recommendations about in-water cleaning in Commonwealth waters](#); and
- refer to the [Department of Agriculture and Water Resources website](#) for further advice and information on seeking permission to in-water clean in Commonwealth or State and Territory waters.

The 2015 Guidelines now include contact points in each relevant State, Territory and Commonwealth jurisdiction for assessing proposed in-water cleaning requests.

IMO Biofouling Guidelines

The 2015 Guidelines were developed to align with relevant international maritime conventions and reflect the approach of the Biofouling Guidelines, which were adopted in 2011 by the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) in Resolution MEPC.207(62). The aim of the Biofouling Guidelines is to achieve a globally consistent approach to managing biofouling by providing information on general measures to minimise the risks associated with biofouling for all types of vessels.

The MEPC also agreed that the Biofouling Guidelines would be kept under review to incorporate the knowledge gained from their implementation. Such a review would include an assessment of whether the Biofouling Guidelines are effective in influencing biofouling management practices.

In mid-2017, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources will commence a review of the effectiveness and uptake of the Biofouling Guidelines and the 2015 Guidelines. The review will consider gaps in their implementation and develop a plan to address outstanding issues.

Further information can be found at www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/avm/vessels/biofouling.

A copy of Resolution MEPC.207(62) can be obtained from the [IMO website](http://www.imo.org) or by contacting pestsmarine@agriculture.gov.au

General questions on biofouling or in-water cleaning can be directed to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources at pestsmarine@agriculture.gov.au

Please note that this Marine Notice is not intended to constitute legal advice and is not a substitute for independent professional advice.

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