



INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 165

International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (Ballast Water Management Convention)

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

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Bulletin provides information on the key requirements of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (often referred to as the Ballast Water Management Convention or BWM Convention).
- 1.2. References to Articles and Regulations in this Bulletin are references to the BWM Convention unless stated otherwise.

2. Application

- 2.1. In general, the BWM Convention applies to any ship designed or constructed to carry ballast water.
- 2.2. Ballast water is defined as water "taken on board a ship to control trim, list, draught, stability or stresses of the ship" (Article 1.2). The presence of "ballast water capacity" on a ship triggers the application of the BWM Convention.
- 2.3. The BWM Convention does not apply to:
 - i. Ships not designed or constructed to carry ballast water (Article 3.2(a));
 - ii. Ships operating only in waters under the jurisdiction of their Flag State, unless discharge of ballast water is considered to be a threat to the environment, human health, property or resources, or those of adjacent or other States (Article 3.2(b));

- iii. Ships operating only in waters (or between the high seas and such waters) under the jurisdiction of another State which is a Party to the Convention, subject to authorisation of the Coastal State (Articles 3.2(c) and (d));
- iv. Warships, naval auxiliaries or other ships owned or operated by a State and on governmental non-commercial service (Article 3.2(e)); and
- v. Ships using permanent ballast in sealed tanks, not subject to discharge (Article 3.2(f)).

3. Status of the Convention

- 3.1. The BWM Convention was adopted on 13 February 2004, the entry into force requirements were met on 08 September 2016 and the Convention entered into force on 08 September 2017.
- 3.2. The Bahamas ratified the Convention on 08 June 2017 and the Convention has applied to Bahamian ships as of the entry into force date.

4. Background

- 4.1. The BWM Convention aims at preventing, minimising and ultimately eliminating the different risks arising from the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms (e.g. Zebra mussels) and pathogens (e.g. microbes such as vibrio cholera). It requires ships to control and manage ballast water and sediments.
- 4.2. The BWM Convention consists of 22 Articles and supporting regulations. The regulations are divided in to five sections (A to E).
- 4.3. Section D of the regulations outline the standards for ballast water management and contains the two regulations commonly referred to as the "D-1 standard" and the "D-2 standard":
 - i. Regulation D-1: Standards for ballast water exchange;
 - ii. Regulation D-2: Standards for the discharge of treated ballast water (i.e. for ballast water treatment systems).
- 4.4. The BWM Convention is supplemented by a set of 14 Guidelines, adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC) Resolutions. Although recommendatory by nature, these Guidelines were developed to support the uniform implementation of the Convention and are widely implemented. They

cover several topics including development of Ballast Water Management Plans (G4), ballast water exchange (G6), type approval of Ballast Water treatment systems (G8) and other subjects.

- 4.5. In addition to the 14 Guidelines, IMO has issued several resolutions, guidelines and circulars related to the implementation of the BWM Convention.
- 4.6. A list of the current resolutions, guidelines and circulars is available on the IMO website by [clicking here](#); this list is also provided in the [Annex](#) to this Bulletin for reference.

5. Exceptions, exemptions and equivalent compliance

- 5.1. While the general scope of application covers virtually any ship provided with ballast tanks, the BWM Convention also provides for possible exceptions, exemptions or equivalent compliance methods, each with specific criteria and conditions to be met.
- 5.2. Regulation A-3 on Exceptions refers to possible circumstances where the discharge requirements cannot be met, such as:
 - i. Exceptional situations, such as emergency situations, following damage to the ship or its equipment, or for avoiding or minimising pollution events;
 - ii. Uptake and discharge on the high seas of the same ballast water;
 - iii. Discharge of ballast water at the same location where the whole of that ballast water originated (no mixing with waters from different origins).
- 5.3. Regulation A-4 on Exemptions refers to the possibility for the Administration of a State Party to the Convention to grant exemptions to certain ships, in waters under its jurisdiction. This means that The Bahamas can only issue exemptions to ships that are in Bahamian waters¹.
- 5.4. The following conditions apply to exemptions:
 - i. The ship operates exclusively between specified ports or locations;
 - ii. A risk assessment is performed, based on the IMO *G7 Guidelines for risk assessment under regulation A-4*, before the exemption request;
 - iii. The exemption can be granted for a maximum of five years, with intermediate review.

¹ "Bahamian waters" means all areas of water subject to the jurisdiction of The Bahamas, and includes territorial waters, internal waters and archipelagic waters (s.2, Merchant Shipping Act (Ch.268))

- iv. An exemption can apply to an individual ship or a group of similar ships.
- 5.5. Regulation A-5 on equivalent compliance refers to a simplified application of the Convention for pleasure craft used solely for recreation or competition or craft used primarily for search and rescue services, of less than 50 metres in length overall and with a maximum Ballast Water capacity of 8m³ (see G3 Guidelines).

6. Ballast Water Management Requirements

- 6.1. All ships to which the Convention applies shall only conduct discharge of ballast water that has been exchanged (standard D-1) or treated (standard D-2), in accordance with the timeline outlined below. Ballast water exchange (D-1) is a compliant measure until regulation D-2 applies for a specific ship.
- 6.2. The implementation dates (regulation B-3) for standards D-1 and D-2 were originally set in the expectation that the Convention would have been ratified much earlier, but new implementation dates [were](#) agreed by IMO at MEPC 71.
- 6.3. New ships to which the Convention applies, with a keel laying date on or after 08 September 2017, shall comply with the discharge standard D-2 on delivery.
- 6.4. Existing ships to which the Convention applies, with a keel laying date before 08 September 2017, shall comply with the discharge standard D-2 by the dates outlined below:
 - 6.4.1. Where a ship has completed an IOPP renewal survey prior to 08 September 2014 and the IOPP renewal survey has not been de-harmonised, compliance with the D-2 standard shall be met by not later than the second scheduled IOPP renewal survey after 08 September 2014, but in any case, prior to 08 September 2024.
 - 6.4.2. Where a ship has completed either a scheduled or de-harmonised IOPP renewal survey on or after 08 September 2014, but prior to 08 September 2017, compliance with the D-2 standard shall be demonstrated by the first scheduled or de-harmonised IOPP renewal survey after 08 September 2017;
 - 6.4.3. For the purposes of the application of paragraphs 6.4.1 and 6.4.2:

- i. A scheduled IOPP renewal survey is considered to be a survey performed in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 6.2 of MARPOL Annex I, and in line with Assembly Resolution [A.1120\(30\) Survey Guidelines Under the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification \(HSSC\) 2017](#);
 - ii. A de-harmonised IOPP renewal survey is considered to be a renewal survey performed earlier than the one described in paragraph i. above.
- 6.5. A ship to which the Convention applies that is not required to have an IOPP Certificate (generally ships of below 400 gross tonnage) shall comply with the discharge standard D-2 by not later than 08 September 2024.
- 6.6. Regulation D-1 (ballast water exchange) remains valid and applicable until a ship is required to comply with regulation D-2.
- 6.7. Where ships that are not yet required to comply with regulation D-2 are operating in sea areas where ballast water exchange in accordance with regulation B-4.1 and D-1 is not possible, MEPC has recommended that the ship:
 - i. should not be required to meet the D-2 standard;
 - ii. should not be required to meet the D-2 standard regardless if the ship does not comply with regulation B-3.6 (Discharge to a ballast water reception facility), B-3.7 (Other methods) or A-4 (Exemptions) of the BWM Convention;
 - iii. should not be required to proceed under regulation B-3.6, B-3.7 or A-4 of the BWM Convention; and
 - iv. should record the reasons why ballast water exchange was not conducted in accordance with regulation B-4.5.
- 6.8. Ballast water treatment systems (BWTS), used for compliance with regulation D-2, shall be type approved by a Bahamas Recognised Organisation, in accordance with the IMO G8 or G9 Guidelines.
- 6.9. Ballast water treatment systems that have been approved by another Administration, in accordance with the G8 or G9 Guidelines, will be considered for acceptance by the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.10. The discharge of untreated ballast water to an adequate reception facility ashore is considered as a compliant method. However, it should be noted that the number of ballast water reception facilities available worldwide is still very limited.

7. Contingency Measures

- 7.1. Where, owing to malfunction or other unforeseen difficulties, a ship is unable to manage ballast water in accordance with its approved Ballast Water Management plan to meet the D-1 or D-2 standard, as applicable, the ship shall notify the Port State authorities of the next port of call at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.2. The conditions under which a ship may be permitted to discharge non-compliant ballast water should be discussed between the ship and port State well in advance of the ship's arrival and the following should be considered as possible contingency measures, as outlined in BWM.2/Circ.62:
- i. Actions predetermined in the Ballast Water Management plan of the ship;
 - ii. discharging ballast water to another ship or to an appropriate shipboard or land-based reception facility, if available;
 - iii. managing the ballast water or a portion of it in accordance with a method acceptable to the port State;
 - iv. ballast water exchange carried out to an approved plan in accordance with regulation B-4 to meet the standard in regulation D-1. The ship and the port State should consider the potential disruption to the cargo handling operation plan of the ship and the potential impact to relating parties including port operators and cargo owners; or
 - v. operational actions, such as modifying sailing or ballast water discharge schedules, internal transfer of ballast water or the retention of ballast water on board the ship. The port State and the ship should consider any safety issues and avoid possible undue delays.
- 7.3. Having considered all of the options in paragraph 3 above, the ballast water may be discharged in the port or any suitable area, as acceptable to the port State. Port State consideration may include environmental, safety, operational and logistical implications of allowing or disallowing the discharge. The discharge of ballast water is subject to any conditions of the port State.
- 7.4. The ship is required to do its best to correct malfunction of the Ballast Water Management system as soon as possible and submit its repair plan to the port State control authorities and the BMA.
- 7.5. The Port State will inform the IMO of every occasion where specific contingency measures have been agreed.

8. Surveys, certification and documentary requirements

- 8.1. Existing and new build ships are required to have the following documents on board:
- i. A Ballast Water Management Plan (regulation B-1 and Guidelines G4), approved by the Recognised Organisation which classes the ship;
 - ii. A Ballast Water Record Book² (regulation B-2); and
 - iii. An International Ballast Water Management Certificate (or Statement of Compliance), issued after survey (regulation E-1), for all ships of 400 gross tonnage and above, excluding floating platforms, FSUs and FPSOs (see paragraph 9).
- 8.2. Ballast water management plans that have already been approved in accordance with Resolution A.868(20)³, which was superseded by Resolution MEPC.127(53)⁴ in 2005, remain valid until the plan requires revision due to the installation of a ballast water treatment system (see BWM.2/Circ.40). Ballast water management plans are to be approved by the Recognised Organisation that classes the ship.
- 8.3. Statutory surveys for the International Ballast Water Management Certificate are to be performed in accordance with the Guidelines in IMO Circular BWM.2/Circ.7.
- 8.4. Bahamas Recognised Organisations shall issue International Ballast Water Management Certificates to Bahamian ships on completion of the first survey under Regulation E-1 that takes place on or after 09 June 2017, as outlined in BWM.2/Circ.40.
- 8.5. Bahamian ships that have been satisfactorily surveyed for compliance with the Convention before 08 June 2017 may have been issued with a Statement of Compliance with the Ballast Water Management Convention, valid for a maximum of five years.
- 8.6. Statements of Compliance with the Ballast Water Management Convention that have been issued to Bahamian ships by Bahamas Recognised Organisations shall be replaced directly with International Ballast Water Management Certificates at the first survey under Regulation E-1 that takes place on or after 09 June 2017, with the expiry date being no later than that on the existing Statement of Compliance.

² Ballast Water Record Books are available for purchase from the BMA – see BMA Information Bulletin No.152

³ A.868(20) *Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens (November 1997)*

⁴ MEPC.127(53) *Guidelines for Ballast Water Management and Development of Ballast Water Management Plans (G4) (July 2005)*

- 8.7. The transitional arrangements described in paragraph 8.6 will apply for a period of 15 months, i.e. until 08 September 2018.
- 8.8. The BMA recommends that a copy of this Bulletin is retained in the ship's certificate file until an International Ballast Water Management Certificate has been issued.

9. FPSOs, FSUs and floating offshore platforms

- 9.1. The Convention applies to FPSOs, FSUs and offshore platforms. Whilst Regulation E-1 (Surveys) is not applicable to these types of unit, to ensure that the applicable provisions of the Convention are complied with, as required by Regulation E-1.2, The Bahamas requires these units to be surveyed and issued with a Statement of Compliance.
- 9.2. Paragraph 9.1 does not apply where an exclusion, exception, exemption or equivalence is in place for the unit.
- 9.3. Article 1.1 of the Convention defines the Administration as the Government of the coastal State for floating platforms engaged in exploration and exploitation of its natural resources, which includes FPSOs and FSUs. Operators of such units are therefore advised to consult the coastal State in which the unit is operating to establish their requirements in respect of the Convention.
- 9.4. Further guidance on the application of the BWM Convention to mobile offshore units can be found in IMO Circular BWM.2/Circ.46.

10. United States of America

- 10.1. The United States Coast Guard has issued guidance on its Ballast Water Management Program. Please refer to Marine Safety Information Bulletin 13-15 ([click here](#)), Coast Guard Policy Letter No.13-01, Revision 2 ([click here](#)), Marine Safety Information Bulletin 010/16 ([click here](#)), Marine Safety Information bulletin 003/17 ([click here](#)) and Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 01-18 ([click here](#)).

11. Revision History

Rev.4 (29 June 2018) – Section 3 updated, link to IMO resolutions, guidelines and circulars in 4.6 and Annex updated, section 6 updated (old information removed, new 6.7), new section 7 on contingency, old section 7 on IOPP renewal surveys deleted, updated references to US requirements, old section 11 deleted

Rev.3 (05 September 2017) – Paragraph 7.7 amended for “recoupling” IOPP Certificates

Rev.2 (11 August 2017) – Addition of link to RINA advice in paragraph 6.6

Rev.1 (09 August 2017) – Revision of paragraphs 6, 7 & 11 following developments at MEPC71 (new text shown in blue)

Rev.0 (09 June 2017) – First issue

**GUIDELINES AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT
OF SHIPS' BALLAST WATER AND SEDIMENTS, 2004**

Table 1: List of Guidelines for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention

Resolution	Title	Status
MEPC.152(55)	Guidelines for sediment reception facilities (G1)	
MEPC.173(58)	Guidelines for ballast water sampling (G2)	
MEPC.123(53)	Guidelines for ballast water management equivalent compliance (G3)	
MEPC.127(53)	Guidelines for ballast water management and development of ballast water management plans (G4)	
MEPC.153(55)	Guidelines for ballast water reception facilities (G5)	
MEPC.288(71)	2017 Guidelines for ballast water exchange (G6)	Revokes MEPC.124(53)
MEPC.289(71)	2017 Guidelines for risk assessment under regulation A-4 of the BWM Convention (G7)	Supersedes MEPC.162(56)
MEPC.174(58)*	Guidelines for approval of ballast water management systems (G8)	Revokes MEPC.125(53)
MEPC.279(70)*	2016 Guidelines for approval of ballast water management systems (G8)	Supersedes MEPC.174(58)
MEPC.169(57)	Procedure for approval of ballast water management systems that make use of active substances (G9)	Revokes MEPC.126(53)
MEPC.140(54)	Guidelines for approval and oversight of prototype ballast water treatment technology programmes (G10)	
MEPC.149(55)	Guidelines for ballast water exchange design and construction standards (G11)	
MEPC.209(63)	2012 Guidelines on design and construction to facilitate sediment control on ships (G12)	Revokes MEPC.150(55)
MEPC.161(56)	Guidelines for additional measures regarding ballast water management including emergency situations (G13)	
MEPC.151(55)	Guidelines on designation of areas for ballast water exchange (G14)	

Table 2: Indicative list of other resolutions and guidelines related to the implementation of the BWM Convention

Resolution	Title	Status
MEPC.290(71)	The experience-building phase associated with the BWM Convention	
MEPC.287(71)	Implementation of the BWM Convention	Supersedes A.1088(28)
MEPC.253(67)	Measures to be taken to facilitate entry into force of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004	
MEPC.252(67)	Guidelines for port State control under the BWM Convention	
MEPC.228(65)	Information reporting on type approved ballast water management systems	Revokes MEPC.175(58)

* Administrations should apply the 2016 Guidelines (G8) when approving ballast water management systems from 28 October 2018. Ballast water management systems installed on ships on or after 28 October 2020 should be approved taking into account the 2016 Guidelines (G8) (MEPC.279(70)).

Annex – List of Guidelines and Guidance Documents

Table 2 (continued)

MEPC.206(62)	Procedure for approving other methods of ballast water management in accordance with regulation B-3.7 of the BWM Convention	
MEPC.188(60)	Installation of ballast water management systems on new ships in accordance with the application dates contained in the ballast water management convention (BWM Convention)	
MEPC.163(56)	Guidelines for ballast water exchange in the Antarctic treaty area	

Table 3: Indicative list of BWM Circulars related to the implementation of the BWM Convention

Circular	Title	Status
BWM.2/Circ.63	Application of the Convention to ships operating in sea areas where ballast water exchange in accordance with regulations B-4.1 and D-1 is not possible	
BWM.2/Circ.62	Guidance on contingency measures under the BWM Convention	
BWM.2/Circ.61	Guidance on methodologies that may be used for enumerating viable organisms for type approval of ballast water management systems	
BWM.2/Circ.52/Rev.1	Guidance on entry or re-entry of ships into exclusive operation within waters under the jurisdiction of a single Party	Supersedes BWM.2/Circ.52
BWM.2/Circ.46	Application of the BWM Convention to Mobile Offshore Units	
BWM.2/Circ.45	Clarification of "major conversion" as defined in regulation A-1.5 of the BWM Convention	
BWM.2/Circ.44	Options for ballast water management for Offshore Support Vessels in accordance with the BWM Convention	
BWM.2/Circ.43/Rev.1	Amendments to the Guidance for Administrations on the type approval process for ballast water management systems in accordance with Guidelines (G8) (BWM.2/Circ.28)	Supersedes BWM.2/Circ.43
BWM.2/Circ.42/Rev.1	Guidance on ballast water sampling and analysis for trial use in accordance with the BWM Convention and Guidelines (G2)	Supersedes BWM.2/Circ.42
BWM.2/Circ.40	Issuance of Ballast Water Management Certificates prior to entry into force of the BWM Convention and Ballast Water Management Plans approved according to resolution A.868(20)	
BWM.2/Circ.37	Information that should be made available in proposals for approval of ballast water management systems in accordance with the Procedure for approval of ballast water management systems that make use of Active Substances (G9)	
BWM.2/Circ.33/Rev.1	Guidance on scaling of ballast water management systems	Supersedes BWM.2/Circ.33
BWM.2/Circ.32	Applicability of the Ballast Water Management Convention to hopper dredgers	

Annex – List of Guidelines and Guidance Documents

Table 3 (continued)

BWM.2/Circ.29/ Rev.1	Clarification regarding the application dates contained in regulation B-3 of the BWM Convention	Supersedes BWM.2/Circ.29
BWM.2/Circ.27	Framework for determining when a Basic Approval granted to one ballast water management system may be applied to another system that uses the same Active Substance or Preparation	
BWM.2/Circ.21	Engineering Questionnaire on Ballast Water Management Systems	
BWM.2/Circ.20	Guidance to ensure safe handling and storage of chemicals and preparations used to treat ballast water and the development of safety procedures for risks to the ship and crew resulting from the treatment process	
BWM.2/Circ.17	Guidance document on arrangements for responding to emergency situations involving ballast water operations	
BWM.2/Circ.13/ Rev.4	Methodology for information gathering and conduct of work of the GESAMP-BWWG	
BWM.2/Circ.13/ Rev.3	Methodology for information gathering and conduct of work of the GESAMP-BWWG	
BWM.2/Circ.13/ Rev.2	Methodology for information gathering and conduct of work of the GESAMP-BWWG	
BWM.2/Circ.13/ Rev.1	Methodology for information gathering and conduct of work of the GESAMP-BWWG	
BWM.2/Circ.8	Harmonized implementation of the Guidelines for approval of Ballast Water Management Systems (G8)	
BWM.2/Circ.7	Interim Survey Guidelines for the purpose of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments under the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification (resolution A.948(23))	

Note: all tables updated in May 2018. The lists in Tables 2 and 3 are not exhaustive. For a full list of resolutions and BWM circulars, please consult the [Index of IMO Resolutions](#) and the publically available [Circulars](#) at IMODOCS.