

EXPLANATORY DOCUMENT

STATUTORY ALERT: ROPME SEA AREA Ballast Water Management Regulation

Applicability: All Shipowners, Operators and Charterers

INFORMATION

In light of the Ballast Water Management Convention that replaced the voluntary guidelines and considering the specific provisions of the Convention, it is desired to take the necessary steps to mitigate the risk of introduction of harmful species and also to harmonize National and Regional policies to address the issue of Ballast Water in the RSA.

The ROPME Sea Area (RSA) is defined as extending between the following geographic latitudes and longitudes, respectively: 16°39'N, 53°3'30"E; 16°00'N, 53°25'E; 17°00'N, 56°30'E; 20°30'N, 60°00'E; 25°04'N, 61°25'E. It is the largest recipient of ships' ballast water. Annually, more than 50,000 vessels visit this area and discharge a large amount of ballast water. The RSA is a semi-enclosed water body with intensely hot summers and short cool winters, extensive air and water temperature fluctuation and relatively high salinity. It is also characterized by high turbidity and low exchange of water with open sea. Therefore, there is a need also to manage and control the spread of harmful aquatic species in ships' ballast water by implementing a set of measures such as ballast water exchange outside the ROPME Sea Area.

With effect from November 1, 2009, all ships, regardless of flag, will be required to exchange and treat all Ballast water taken up outside the ROPME Sea Area for the Protection of the Marine Environment. This comprises the states of Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Taking into consideration the provisions of the regulation B-4 of the Ballast Water Management Convention, the following points should be observed:

1- Vessels arriving from outside the ROPME Sea Area should undertake ballast water exchange en route in water over 200 nautical miles from the nearest land and in water at least 200 metres depth.

2- If this is not possible for safety reasons, then vessels should be expected to make minor deviations to areas within the 200 nautical miles limit that can be identified as discharge area, so long as such areas are more than 50 nautical miles from the nearest land in waters at least 200 metres depth.

3- If this is not achievable, then the ship shall provide the respective authority with the reason why she has not done so, and further ballast water management measures may be required, consistent with the Ballast Water Management Convention and other international laws.

Ballast Water, which has been treated with a ballast water treatment system approved in accordance with IMO standards, does not need to be exchanged.

Ships will be required to have on board an approved Ballast Water Management Plan in accordance with the IMO standards. Ships should also have and maintain a ballast water Record Book.

From the date specified above, all the ships passing Strait of Hormoz will be required to complete the Regional Ballast Water Reporting Form (RBWRF) herewith attached. The ships will be inspected by the Port State Control Officers to ensure these Regional requirements are fully implemented.

Further to the above and since the principle of the ballast water exchange outside the ROPME Sea Area is to avoid the transfer of Non-indigenous harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens from another sea area the Regulation A-4 – Exemptions are applied.

Regulation A-4

Exemptions

1 A Party or Parties, in waters under their jurisdiction, may grant exemptions to any requirements to apply regulations B-3 or C-1, in addition to those exemptions contained elsewhere in this Convention, but only when they are:

- .1 granted to a ship or ships on a voyage or voyages between specified ports or locations; or to a ship which operates exclusively between specified ports or locations;
- .2 effective for a period of no more than five years subject to intermediate review;
- .3 granted to ships that do not mix Ballast Water or Sediments other than between the ports or locations specified in paragraph 1.1; and
- .4 granted based on the Guidelines on risk assessment developed by the Organization.

2 Exemptions granted pursuant to paragraph 1 shall not be effective until after communication to the Organization and circulation of relevant information to the Parties.

3 Any exemptions granted under this regulation shall not impair or damage the environment, human health, property or resources of adjacent or other States. Any State that the Party determines may be adversely affected shall be consulted, with a view to resolving any identified concerns.

4 Any exemptions granted under this regulation shall be recorded in the Ballast Water record book.

HELP US TO HELP YOU – if you are an owner or operator and require further assistance, please get in touch with your local Ship's Agent or respected Port Authority or MEMAC as the Regional Centre at memac@batelco.com.bh at the earliest opportunity and we will be happy to assist.

ROPME SEA AREA CHART



