



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Water and the Environment

# Australian biofouling management requirements

Version 1



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This publication (and any material sourced from it) should be attributed as: DAWE 2022, *Australian biofouling management requirements* (Version 1), Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Canberra, May. CC BY 4.0.

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### **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Reporting and verification .....</b>	<b>1</b>
2.1	Reporting biofouling management activities .....	1
2.2	Biofouling verification inspections.....	2
<b>3</b>	<b>Proactive biofouling management options .....</b>	<b>2</b>
3.1	Implementation of an effective biofouling management plan .....	2
3.2	Cleaned all biofouling within 30 days prior to arrival.....	4
3.3	Alternative biofouling management method pre-approved by the department.....	5
<b>4</b>	<b>Vessel operators that cannot demonstrate proactive biofouling management practices .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Phased introduction of new requirements .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>In-water cleaning in Australian waters .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>More information .....</b>	<b>6</b>

# 1 Introduction

The Australian biofouling management requirements set out vessel operator obligations for the management of biofouling when operating vessels under biosecurity control within Australian territorial seas.

The department's powers to manage biosecurity risk associated with biofouling are contained in the *Commonwealth Biosecurity Act 2015* and associated legislation.

The requirements provide guidance for vessel operators on best practice and applies to operators of all international vessels that are subject to biosecurity control while in Australian territorial seas. Contact details for more information on these requirements is included in [section 7](#).

Some Australian state and territory legislation relates to the management of biofouling. Please check with the relevant [state and territory contacts](#) to ensure compliance with their requirements.

We will be verifying the accuracy of information provided in the pre-arrival report as part of vessel inspections.

An education phase for the requirements will apply from 15 June 2022 to 15 December 2023. During this time we will seek to assist vessel operators in meeting their regulatory obligations by providing information and advice to help them understand what is expected and ensure their actions are compliant.

During the education phase there will be a focus on improving the quality and effectiveness of biofouling management plans.

## 2 Reporting and verification

### 2.1 Reporting biofouling management activities

All operators of vessels intending to enter Australian territorial waters must provide information relating to biofouling management through the mandatory pre-arrival report (PAR).

From 15 June 2022, the PAR will include the following questions about biofouling management:

- 1) Does the vessel have an effective biofouling management plan?
- 2) Has the vessel been cleaned of all biofouling within 30 days of arriving in Australia?
- 3) Does the vessel have an alternative biofouling management method that has been pre-approved by the department?
- 4) Do you intend to in-water (underwater) clean biofouling in Australia?

Vessel operators that do not implement accepted biofouling management practices will be subject to further questions and assessment of the biosecurity risk associated with biofouling on the vessel.

## 2.2 Biofouling verification inspections

Biosecurity officers may verify the accuracy of biofouling management information reported in the PAR during vessel inspections. Sufficient evidence must be available for verification on request. The department may also conduct inspections of vessels' submerged hull and niche areas.

# 3 Proactive biofouling management options

Vessel operators can demonstrate proactive management of biofouling by implementing one of the 3 accepted proactive biofouling management options:

- 1) Implementation of an effective biofouling management plan
- 2) Cleaned all biofouling within 30 days prior to arriving in Australian territory
- 3) Implementation of an alternative biofouling management method pre-approved by the department.

Documentary evidence must be available upon request by a departmental officer.

## 3.1 Implementation of an effective biofouling management plan

See PAR question 1) Does the vessel have an effective biofouling management plan?

### Documents required

If you report that an effective biofouling management plan has been implemented, you must be able to provide the following documents to the department upon request:

- Biofouling management plan
- Biofouling record book
- Supporting evidence.

The documents must meet the requirements set out in this section.

### Biofouling management plan

An effective biofouling management plan (BFMP) must be vessel specific and should be included in ships' operational documentation. The BFMP must provide sufficient detail for the crew to implement the specified biofouling management activities; including the following:

- vessel's particulars
- description of the planned operating profile, including
  - typical operating speeds
  - proportion underway at sea compared with periods berthed, anchored or moored
  - typical operating areas or trading routes

- planned duration between dry-docking or slipping
- details of the anti-fouling coatings on the vessel and operational information including
  - where they are applied, including niche areas
  - a schedule of operational and maintenance activities
  - effective in-service period
  - intended operating conditions
- details of the biofouling management activities for each of the niche areas of the vessel, including
  - schedule of planned inspections, repairs, maintenance and renewal of anti-fouling systems
  - diagram of relevant locations on the vessel
- management actions that can be implemented based on the outcomes of in-water biofouling inspections
- contingency methods to be implemented if the vessel operates outside the operational profile set out in the BFMP
- planned in-water biofouling inspection schedule
- relevant safety procedures for the ship and crew
- detail the process to record information in a biofouling record book (BFRB) to verify all biofouling management activities that are completed.

An effectively implemented biofouling management plan consistent with the International Maritime Organization's 2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ships biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species will be accepted.

The [International Maritime Organization](#) and the [Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology](#) provide templates for biofouling management plans.

It is not a requirement to have a biofouling management plan approved by a classification society.

### **Biofouling record book**

The BFRB should contain a complete and up-to-date record of all biofouling management activities undertaken on the vessel, including:

- all operational and maintenance activities that have been carried out, consistent with the planned activities and schedules identified in the vessel's BFMP, including
  - dates and locations of dry-docking or slippings, including the date the vessel was re-floated and any measures taken to remove biofouling or renew or repair the antifouling system
  - the date and location of in-water inspections, the results of that inspection and any actions taken to manage observed biofouling
  - the date and location of internal seawater system inspection and maintenance, the results of the inspections and any actions taken to manage observed biofouling

- details of any times the vessel has been operating outside the planned operating profile identified in the BFMP, including any times the vessel was laid up or inactive for extended periods of time
- other supporting documentation that may assist with decision making during the in-service period
  - General Arrangement schematics
  - Docking Plan schematics
  - hull penetration, overboard discharge, ballast tank drainage plug schematics
  - internal seawater system schematics and simplified sketches/drawings
  - Anti-fouling Coating Certificate (issued by a Classification Society)
  - coating manufacturer’s docking report
  - sketches, diagrams, schematics of areas vulnerable to biofouling accumulation
  - Marine Growth Prevention System Operational Manual, diagrams, maintenance schedule.

The BFRB should be kept from the date the BFMP came into effect and retained for the life of the vessel. The biofouling record book may be electronic or in hard copy.

The BFRB should be made available for inspection on request.

## **3.2 Cleaned all biofouling within 30 days prior to arrival**

See PAR question 2) Has the vessel been cleaned of all biofouling within 30 days of arriving in Australia?

### **Documents required**

If you report that the vessel has had all biofouling cleaned (including from hull and niche areas) within 30 days prior to arrival in Australian territorial seas, you must be able to provide the following documents to the department on request:

- cleaning report
- supporting photographs or video.

The documents must meet the requirements set out in this section.

### **Cleaning report**

A biofouling cleaning report must include the following:

- ship’s particulars for the vessel that was cleaned
- details of the company that performed the cleaning operation
- location and date(s) that the cleaning operation took place and date the final report was provided
- specified areas of hull and niche areas that were cleaned and the methods utilised for each
- specified areas of the hull and niche areas that were not cleaned due to absence of biofouling



- supporting photographs or video. All supporting photographs and video must include the following
  - date stamp
  - clear images of any biofouling present
  - description of what the image shows, including location on the vessel.

### **3.3 Alternative biofouling management method pre-approved by the department**

See PAR question 3) Does the vessel have an alternative biofouling management method that has been pre-approved by the department?

#### **Documents required**

If you report the implementation an alternative biofouling management method pre-approved by the department, you must be able to provide the appropriate documentation on request, including:

- department issued approval, specific to the vessel and voyage
- any required documents as specified in the department issued approval.

The documents must meet the requirements set out in this section.

#### **Department approval of alternative biofouling management method**

The department may approve an alternative biofouling management method where it is satisfied that the vessel operator has demonstrated that:

- it is not practical for either method set out in [section 3.1](#) or [section 3.2](#) to be implemented for that voyage
- the proposed alternative method appropriately manages the biosecurity risk associated with biofouling for that voyage.

The vessel operator must provide the information specified in the approval, on request.

If you want to propose an alternative biofouling management method, email the department immediately at [marinepests@awe.gov.au](mailto:marinepests@awe.gov.au).

## **4 Vessel operators that cannot demonstrate proactive biofouling management practices**

A vessel operator that cannot demonstrate implementation of proactive management practices will be asked additional pre-arrival questions. The department will use the responses to make an initial assessment of the risk that the vessel presents.



The department may also conduct inspections of vessels' submerged hull and niche areas to inform assessments of whether the vessel presents an unacceptable biosecurity risk associated with biofouling.

## 5 Phased introduction of new requirements

The department is taking a phased approach to introducing new biofouling requirements. Between 15 June 2022 and 15 December 2023 an education-first approach will be taken for the Australian Biofouling Management Requirements. Powers under the Act will continue to be used to manage unacceptable biosecurity risk associated with biofouling.

## 6 In-water cleaning in Australian waters

The approval process to conduct in-water cleaning or treatment in an Australian port is complex. The application process varies between jurisdictions and can involve multiple government agencies and port authorities who consider the biosecurity risks and impacts the activity will have on the environment and operation of the port.

To obtain permission to clean your vessel in Australian state or territory waters, contact the relevant authorities. It is important you give authorities sufficient time to consider your request before your proposed cleaning activity. Some Australian state and territory governments have separate legislation relating to the removal and disposal of biofouling. Ensure you check with the relevant state and territories. See [Anti-fouling and in-water cleaning guidelines](#) for contacts.

Be aware that in-water cleaning requests are unlikely to be approved due to the high biosecurity and environmental risks associated with in-water cleaning and treatment activities.

## 7 More information

For more information about the management of biofouling and demonstrating biofouling management practices, see [managing biofouling in Australia](#) or email [marinepests@awe.gov.au](mailto:marinepests@awe.gov.au).