



# Vessel Seasonal Pest Scheme (VSPS) Biosecurity Risk Plan Guide

## The Vessel Seasonal Pest Scheme (VSPS)

To qualify for the VSPS, a vessel operator (shipping line) must submit a Biosecurity Risk Plan to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (the department) for assessment and agreement.

## What to write in the plan?

The VSPS Biosecurity Risk Plan must identify:

1. Vessel names and IMO numbers to be included and their key responsible parties
2. Mandatory cleaning prior to loading and commencement of each separate voyage to Australia.
3. Mandatory Crew Vessel Inspections throughout each individual voyage to Australia.
  - a. All participating vessels must undertake crew vessel inspections and record details on the required template. Inspections must be conducted:
    - i. 48 hours after vessel departs each international region (ie. Europe, Africa, Asia) en-route to Australia
    - ii. The seven (7) days prior to first port of arrival in Australia.
  - b. If further inspections or detections are made in addition to the above (e.g. after any fogging treatments carried out en route), the details of any live or dead insects found must also be provided on the required template.
  - c. Provide clear high-quality photos of all insects found.
  - d. All insects must be refrigerated (NOT stored in the freezer) and presented to a Biosecurity Officer on arrival in Australia.
  - e. The crew vessel inspection reports and photos must be returned with the Seasonal Pest (SP) questionnaire to the National Maritime Centre ([NMC](#)). It is recommended to do this early to avoid delays.  
**Note:** Vessels that visit New Zealand (NZ) prior to arriving to Australia, must also submit the crew vessel inspection report that was provided to the NZ Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to the MNCC.
4. Other measures that will be undertaken prior to and during the voyage to reduce the likelihood of vessel insect contamination while berthed at overseas ports, on-board cross-contamination to other cargo and to detect any infestations.
5. Measures to be undertaken at anchorage to disrupt and/or treat any known infestations.
6. Measures to be undertaken at berth in Australia to detect, monitor and contain any infestations.
7. Measures to be undertaken, if required, onshore to manage any contaminated cargo at each anticipated port of arrival.
8. Measures to be undertaken to improve the biosecurity risk awareness of crew members and their compliance with the agreed plan.
9. The evidence that can and will be provided to the department on request.

## Points to consider when drafting a VSPS plan

Shipping lines to complete a VSPS Biosecurity Risk Plan based on the details below. There are some dot points for consideration when writing the plan:

### Responsible parties

Consider:

- *Who is responsible for implementing this plan?*
- *Who is/are the points of contact for this plan? At specific locations?*

### Introduction

Consider:

- *Providing a basic overview of vessel/industry and contamination considerations - vessel structures, routes, challenges, etc.*
- *What are the objectives of this plan?*
- *What is in scope - all vessels, some vessels, some routes?*
- *Differences in vessel structures, deck layouts.*

### Prior to loading the vessel – at an international port, not Australia

Consider measures undertaken prior to loading or on board to minimise contamination/ infestation including but not limited to:

- *Cleaning of the vessel including all cargo decks, tie down points, ingress/egress points*
- *What activities have been undertaken prior to loading to minimise contamination, e.g. treatment of all cargo by a BMSB approved method; fumigation; inspection, application of residual insecticide to vessel decks?*
- *What activities have been undertaken on board the vessel to detect any insect infestations, e.g. crew vessel inspection; trapping; insecticide fogging?*
- *What activities have been undertaken on board the vessel to minimise cross-contamination, e.g. segregation of treated and non-treated cargo, segregation of decks?*
- *Loading of new and used cargo, consideration of cross-contamination.*

### During transit – to Australia

Consider

- *Measures for crew vessel inspection of all cargo decks that includes:*
  - *Crew vessel inspection reporting 48 hours after the vessel has departed every international port en-route to Australia, as well as after any fogging applications en-route.*
  - *Crew vessel inspection reporting seven days prior to arrival into Australia.*
- *What activities will be undertaken to prevent the vessel itself from contamination of flying insects while berthed at overseas ports? For example meshing inlet and exhaust vents, keeping ramp doors closed when not loading or unloading, minimise night loading and unloading at known risk ports*
- *What activities will be undertaken on board the vessel to detect any insect infestation, e.g. deck walk inspections; trapping; en-route insecticide fogging and/or residual spray treatments?*
- *Biosecurity awareness and BMSB training for Master and crew which includes storing and collecting insect specimens.*
- *Evidence that agreed crew vessel inspection activities have been undertaken effectively. e.g. insect specimens found must be kept in the fridge and not destroyed.*

### At anchorage – in Australia

Consider measures to be undertaken at anchorage that would disrupt and treat any known infestations

- *How the cargo would be prepared for treatment to maximise effectiveness, e.g. boots, bonnets or doors opened?*
- *How the vessel would be prepared for treatment application to maximise effectiveness, i.e. heated; decks isolated; cargo isolated/contained?*
- *How treatment providers would be transferred to the vessel?*

- *What treatment would be applied; who would apply the treatment; would they be operating under an existing Approved Arrangement; have they obtained all regulatory approvals?*
- *How the treatment would be applied, i.e. fogging or sprayed, to what areas; and how would its delivery be measured/certified?*

#### At berth – in Australia

*Consider measures to be undertaken at berth to detect, monitor and if necessary, contain any infestations*  
Inspection

- *How the cargo would be prepared for inspection for a Biosecurity Officer to maximise effectiveness, e.g. boots, bonnets or doors opened; relocated to maximise access?*

#### Treatment

- *How the cargo would be prepared for treatment to maximise effectiveness, e.g. boots, bonnets or doors opened?*
- *How the vessel would be prepared for treatment application to maximise effectiveness, i.e. decks isolated; cargo isolated/contained?*
- *What treatment would be applied; who would apply the treatment; would they be operating under an existing Approved Arrangement; have they obtained all regulatory approvals?*
- *How the treatment would be applied, i.e. fogging or sprayed, to what areas; and how would its delivery be measured/certified?*

#### Controlled discharge

- *How the ramp and transit path would be prepared and monitored to minimise disturbance, detect insects or to contain fly-offs?*
- *How the cargo would be discharged, e.g. staging; total number of units per tranche; rate of discharge; will it move immediately for treatment; will it be stored inside or outside, covered or uncovered; for what length of time will it be stored before inspection/treatment?*
- *Contingency arrangements should the detection of high risk pests necessitate cessation of the discharge process?*

#### Onshore - prior to unloading in Australia

Consider measures to be undertaken onshore to manage any contaminated cargo.

- *Confirmation that the port authority has agreed to an onshore inspection/treatment process.*

#### Inspection

- *How the cargo would be prepared for inspection by a Biosecurity Officer to maximise effectiveness, e.g. boots, bonnets or doors opened?*

#### Treatment

- *How the cargo would be prepared for treatment to maximise effectiveness, e.g. boots, bonnets or doors opened?*
- *What treatment would be applied; who would apply the treatment; would they be operating under an existing Approved Arrangement; have they obtained all regulatory approvals?*
- *How the treatment would be applied, i.e. heated, fogging or sprayed; total number of units per tranche; rate of treatment; and how would its delivery be measured/certified?*

#### The department's assessment of the plan

Upon receipt of a vessel operator's proposal (the VSPS Biosecurity Risk Plan) the department will convene a review group. Members will:

1. Assess the merits of proposed measures and agree to any conditions that would be applied to their use.
2. Agree whether the vessel operator qualifies for participation in the VSPS.
3. Provide a written response to the vessel operator on the outcome of their proposal.

## VSPS eligibility for each voyage to Australia – Pre arrival of each vessel

Vessels that qualify for the VSPS, must for each separate voyage to Australia:

1. Complete and submit a Pre-Arrival Report (PAR).
2. Complete and submit a Seasonal Pest questionnaire, crew vessel inspection reports and images of any insects found.
3. Have access to and met the obligations of the approved on board VSPS Biosecurity Risk Plan agreed by the department and the vessel's operator.

## Assurance and Sanctions

At all stages of implementation the department will continue to monitor compliance with the VSPS and may verify the performance of agreed activities through assessment of documentary evidence, or as part of existing routine inspection activities.

The purpose of assurance measures is to assess whether the activities performed under the VSPS can provide the department with confidence that the biosecurity risk posed by the vessel is acceptable.

The department will monitor compliance with VSPS requirements through implementing a random inspection regime on eligible vessels to verify the continued compliance of vessel operators in undertaking agreed risk mitigation activities, reporting detections and reporting the risk status of goods.

The following sanctions may be applied under the VSPS:

1. A vessel that provides incomplete or poor-quality crew vessel inspection reports or evidence (photos) of insects detected on board will be given a warning.
2. Continued submission of incomplete or poor-quality crew vessel inspection reports or evidence will result in that vessel being ineligible from participating in the VSPS.
3. A vessel that does not comply with the activities agreed in the VSPS Biosecurity Risk Plan will be given a warning and will receive an SP inspection and may require a dual treatment (thermal pyrethrum fog + residual insecticide).
4. A vessel operator that accrues more than 3 warnings against vessels within its eligible fleet, for not complying with the activities agreed in its VSPS Biosecurity Risk Plan, will be disqualified from participating in the VSPS.
5. A vessel operator that does not or cannot provide supporting evidence when requested to do so will be disqualified from participating in the VSPS.

Where the department is not confident the biosecurity risk associated with a vessel or its cargo can be adequately managed, they may direct the vessel to leave Australian territory and for the cargo to be exported.

Where cargo has been permitted to be discharged and then the department decides the risk is no longer acceptable, the cargo may be directed for export and the vessel directed to leave Australian territory.

## Questions on drafting a plan?

Email the seasonal pests policy team: [safeguarding@awe.gov.au](mailto:safeguarding@awe.gov.au)

## Reportable biosecurity incidents

If you see any unexpected pests, plant matter or soil, **secure** the area and **report** them to the department immediately.

## Who to contact for vessels pre arrival and seasonal pest reporting?

The department's National Maritime Centre (NMC) is based in Adelaide, South Australia.  
Phone: 1300 004 605 (in Australia) or +61 8 8201 6185 (outside Australia), fax 1300 005 882 or email [maritimenc@awe.gov.au](mailto:maritimenc@awe.gov.au)

### NMC operating hours are:

Monday to Sunday 07:00 - 19:00 (06:30 - 18:30 Adelaide time) AEST.

**Emergency only** on-call phone assistance after NMC operating hours is available as listed on the [Vessel Contacts](#) page.

## Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

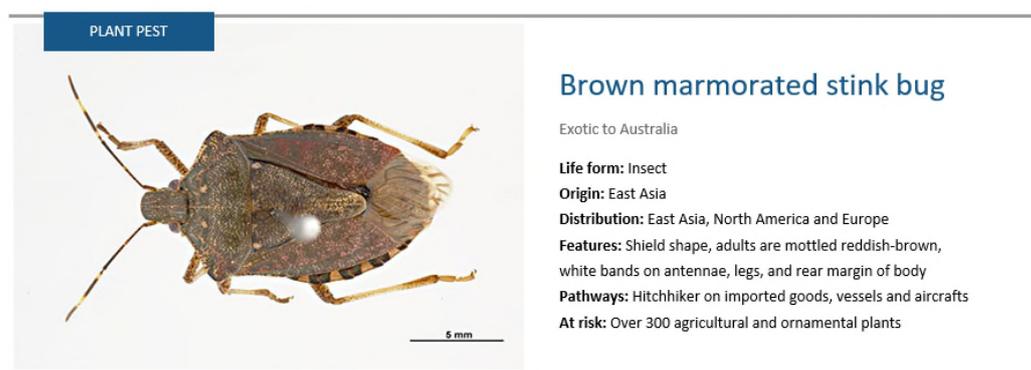
The Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB) and a number of other stink bugs are not present in Australia. Stink bugs and other insect pests have the potential to harm plant health and can have dire economic consequences.

BMSB impacts agricultural industries, as nymphs and adults feed on and can severely damage fruit and vegetable crops, reducing production yields or rendering them unmarketable.

BMSB seeks shelter over winter in places such as vehicles, homes, machinery, shipping containers, boats, caravans and factories, often aggregating in large numbers. They can arrive in Australia on cargo such as cars and containers shipped between September and May. This coincides with autumn and winter in the Northern Hemisphere.

BMSB is just one example of a range of exotic pest species that can hitchhike on cargo and in containers or arrive in wood used for pallets and other packing materials.

## Brown marmorated stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*)



**Illustration above:** Photograph of a BMSB. For further identification details, see the Cargo pest identification guide: [agriculture.gov.au/import/arrival/pests](http://agriculture.gov.au/import/arrival/pests)

### Document information

<b>The following table contains administrative metadata. Policy owner:</b>	Director, Seasonal Pests Policy, Pathway Policy – Cargo and Conveyances Branch, Biosecurity Operations Division
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