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## MARPOL Annex VI Enters Into Force

July 2010

Air pollution from ships cut with entry into force of MARPOL amendments

New and more stringent regulations to reduce harmful emissions from ships are expected to have a significant beneficial impact on the atmospheric environment and on human health, particularly that of people living in port cities and coastal communities.

The revised Annex VI (*Regulations for the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships*) of the *International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships* (MARPOL convention) enters into force globally on 1 July 2010, together with important reductions in sulphur oxide (SOx) emissions in specific areas. It was adopted in October 2008.

The main changes to MARPOL Annex VI will see a progressive reduction of SOx emissions from ships, with the global sulphur cap reduced initially to 3.50% (from the current 4.50%), effective from 1 January 2012; then progressively to 0.50 %, effective from 1 January 2020, subject to a feasibility review to be completed no later than 2018.

The revised Annex VI allows for Emission Control Areas (ECAs) to be designated for SOx and particulate matter, or NOx, or all three types of emissions from ships, subject to a proposal from a Party or Parties to the Annex, which would be considered for adoption by the Organization, if supported by a demonstrated need to prevent, reduce and control one or all three of those emissions from ships.

The limits applicable in sulphur ECAs are reduced to 1.00%, beginning on 1 July 2010 (from the current 1.50%); being further reduced to 0.10%, effective from 1 January 2015. This means that ships trading in the current ECAs will have to burn fuel of lower sulphur content (or use an alternative method to reduce emissions) from 1 July 2010.

The revised Annex lists two ECAs for the control of SOx, and particulate matter: the Baltic Sea area and the North Sea, which includes the English Channel.

A new North American ECA, for SOx, nitrogen oxide (NOx) and particulate matter was adopted by IMO in March 2010. The regulations to implement this ECA are expected to enter into force in August 2011, with the ECA becoming effective from August 2012.

Progressive reductions in NOx emissions from marine engines also come into force, with the most stringent controls on so-called "Tier III" engines, i.e. those installed on ships constructed on or after 1 January 2016, operating in ECAs.

The MARPOL Annex VI Regulations for the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships have, to date, been ratified by 59 countries, representing approximately 84.23 % of the gross tonnage of the world's merchant shipping fleet.

*Based on IMO Briefing 36/2010 of 1 July 2010*

Further information about MARPOL Annex VI is available on the IMO website at: [www.imo.org/Environment/mainframe.asp?topic\\_id=233](http://www.imo.org/Environment/mainframe.asp?topic_id=233)