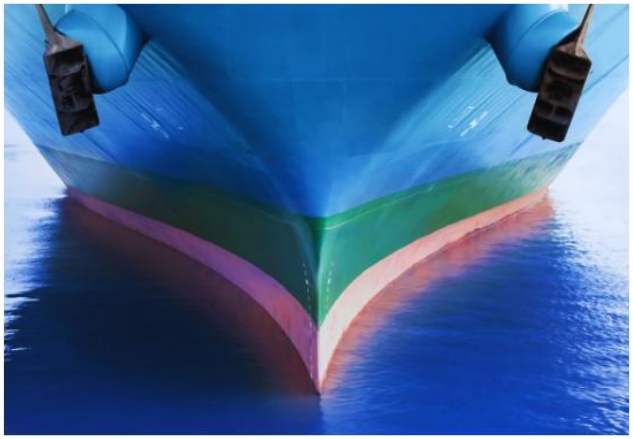
Biofouling Management - Navigating Global Regulatory Requirements



The spread of invasive species is recognised as one of the main drivers of marine biodiversity loss. In the marine environment, biofouling on wetted surfaces and niche areas of the hull can be significant vectors for the transfer of aquatic species. These species could become invasive in the host environment, out-competing native species and multiplying into pest proportions.

The development and application of anti-fouling coating to the ship's hull has proven beneficial in protecting the hull from biofouling, but harmful leaching compounds in these coatings were found to have a negative impact on aquatic species and associated food chain. The recognition of this adverse effect prompted the introduction of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships, 2001. The focus of this Convention is on the prevention of adverse impacts from the use of anti-fouling systems and the biocides they may contain, rather than preventing the transfer of invasive aquatic species through hull fouling.

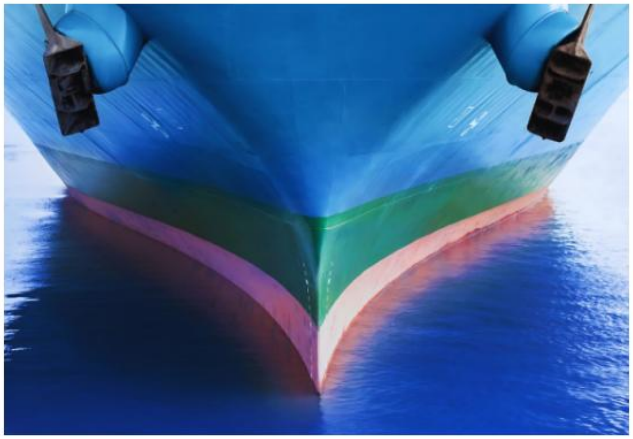
While *"MEPC.378(80) – 2023 Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling to Minimise the Transfer of Invasive Species" (IMO Biofouling Guidelines)* remain voluntary, an increasing number of countries, in recognising the threat to their marine biodiversity, have implemented biofouling regulatory requirements for ships entering their jurisdictions.

Australia, New Zealand and Brazil are amongst the countries which have introduced regulatory requirements for biofouling management through their national legislation, while the State of California in the United States of America has introduced these requirements through California Code of Regulations. The regulatory requirements mandated by these jurisdictions acknowledge the IMO Biofouling Guidelines but also incorporate additional requirements and measures.

The Club has written Risk Alerts compiling the biofouling regulatory requirements for each of these jurisdictions, and these can be accessible through the links below, with the regulatory requirements of other countries being added as they become available.

Members are advised to incorporate the requirements of these and other jurisdictions as they become available in the Biofouling Management Plan (BFMP) and Biofouling Record Book (BFRB) to ensure continued compliance, avoid potential penalties, and prevent operational disruptions to the vessel such as port entry restrictions or vessel detentions.

Biofouling Management - Navigating Global Regulatory Requirements



Supportive Information

For further information on this or other Loss Prevention topics please contact the Loss Prevention Department, Steamship Insurance Management Services Ltd.
Tel: +44 20 7247 5490 Email: loss.prevention@simsl.com

References

- Risk Alert 117 – Biofouling Management – Navigating Global Regulatory Requirements
- Annex 1 – Biofouling Regulations in Australia
- Annex 2 – Biofouling Regulations in New Zealand
- Annex 3 – Biofouling Regulations in Brazil
- Annex 4 – Biofouling regulations in State of California, USA
- International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships, 2001
- MEPC.378(80) – 2023 Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling to Minimise the Transfer of Invasive Species