

Biofouling Management Plan and Record Book Q&As

The International Maritime Organisation has created new Biofouling Guidelines that have been designed to prevent the inhabitation of invasive aquatic species to non-indigenous environments.



What is a Biofouling Management Plan (BMP)?

A Biofouling Management Plan is a description of the vessel's biofouling management practices and strategy in accordance with the requirements set out in "2011 Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ship's Biofouling to Minimize the Transfer of Invasive Aquatic Species" adopted as the IMO guideline, Resolution MEPC.207(62).



Does the Biofouling Management Plan need to be specific for each vessel?

Yes. The Plan must be tailored to suit each vessel due to the variations of technology installed.



When are vessels subject to the Biofouling Management Plan requirement?

The Biofouling Regulations were adopted in California and came into force in 2017. New and existing vessels are subject to the BMP requirements after the first regularly scheduled out of water maintenance on or after January 2018. New Zealand soon implemented the Craft Risk Management Standard for Biofouling on Vessels arriving in New Zealand, which were adopted in 2014 and has been in force since 2018. The latest country to apply biofouling measurements is Australia, which will come into force as of June 2022. Hawaii are also reviewing biofouling on arrival vessels but have yet to implement this into legislative text.



What are the requirements for a Biofouling Management Plan?

- A description of the vessel's biofouling management strategy.
- Be consistent and achieve the requirements in correlation with the Biofouling Management Plan described in the International Maritime Organization's 2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species.
- Include a description of the practices and antifouling systems specifically used for the hull and other niche areas.
- Be up to date with the most recent out-of-water maintenance or delivery.



What is a Clean Hull?

A clean hull is defined as the maximum amount of biofouling observed on a hull or within niche areas that exceed the micro-fouling slime layer also known as a biofilm layer.



What is a Biofouling Record Book?

A Biofouling Record Book is where a vessel's biofouling management activities are recorded to demonstrate that the transfer of invasive species has been minimized.



What are the requirements for a Biofouling Record Book?

- Details of all in-water inspections and biofouling management measures undertaken since the most recent out-of-water maintenance or delivery.



- Be consistent with the Biofouling Record Book described in the IMO Biofouling Guidelines.
- Include descriptions of niche area management activities.



What are niche areas?

Niche areas are key areas for extensive communities of biofouling organisms. Niche areas that need to be managed include: sea chests, sea chest gratings, bow and stern thrusters, bow and stern thruster gratings, fin stabilizers and recesses, out-of-water support strips, propellers and propeller shafts, and rudders.



How must biofouling in niche areas be managed?

Biofouling in the niche areas must be managed using one or more practices that are appropriate for the vessel and its operational profile as determined by the owner, operator, master, or person in charge of the vessel. Niche area management practices must be described in the Biofouling Management Plan and completed actions must be documented in the Biofouling Record Book.



Are any vessels exempt?

At present, the requirements for the Biofouling Management Plan are applicable to vessels which are over 300 Gross Registered Tonnes that are capable of carrying ballast water.



What if the vessel does not have a Biofouling Management Plan on board at its first arrival at a port?

Each country implementing the requirements of the Biofouling Regulations differ in regards to actions that must be taken when entering territorial waters. For example, a vessel will be granted a 60-day grace period at a Californian port to develop a Biofouling Management Plan if one is not already maintained on board the vessel upon the first arrival.



What are the fines/ penalties for breach of compliance?

The California Biofouling Regulations provide vessel owners a 60-day grace period if it is found they are in violation of the regulatory requirements when entering territorial waters. No enforcement action is taken in this grace period, which allows the vessel to rectify the highlighted breach.

Australia have advised in the first year of the enforcement of the Biofouling regulations, an educational approach to non-compliances will be taken by providing vessel operators with recommendations for cleaning methods and preventative measures. New Zealand are actively monitoring vessels entering ports and within the first year of the regulations, 14 vessels varying from commercial tankers to military aircraft carriers, were refused entry until the requirements had been met.

***Please note:** It is advised that vessel owners / operators check the individual national biofouling requirements of the arriving port and that preventative biofouling measures have been completed and recorded to demonstrate regulatory compliance.*



How can we help?

Cathelco® can provide regulatory support in relation to the Marine Growth Prevention System installed within the internals of seawater pipework, provide a generic template of the Biofouling Management Plan and Record Book for use on board, as well as further assistance in completing the relevant sections within the Biofouling Record Book.

For further information, please refer to the following document: 2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ship's biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species (International Marine Organization).