

Marpol

Marpol is the *International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973* as modified by the protocol of 1978. It is an international convention that has been adopted under Australian federal and state law and all commercial mariners are required to comply with its contents in order to prevent pollution incidents while undertaking routine operations on a vessel.

Garbage

Everyday items such as cigarette butts, plastic bags, bottles, cans, discarded fishing line and other fishing gear are common causes of marine pollution. These objects, whether discarded intentionally or simply blown overboard, contribute to increasing pressures on marine ecosystems. Marine animals and sea birds can mistake plastic material for food and, as a result, often end up dying of starvation or strangulation.

Simple measures can help protect marine life and save on the cost of a fine.

- Don't throw anything overboard.
- Have secure bins or garbage bags to store garbage onboard until you return to shore.
- If garbage does end up in the water, take the time to retrieve it.

Under the Marpol Convention there are strict but simple guidelines for the disposal of garbage at sea.





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Agents wanted

Waterways and 3 nm from nearest land	3 to 12 nm from nearest land	12 to 25 nm from nearest land	Outside 25 nm from nearest land
Illegal to dispose of plastics and all forms of garbage.	Illegal to dispose of plastics, food waste, cargo packing and, if not ground to smaller than 25 mm, other garbage.	Illegal to dispose of plastics and cargo packing materials.	Illegal to dispose of plastics.

(Note: in Queensland the nearest land is actually considered outside the Great Barrier Reef.)

All vessels that are operating within Queensland coastal waters are required by law to display a placard that describes garbage disposal requirements for the vessel.

The placard must:

- notify the vessel's crew and passengers of the prohibitions and requirements under the *Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995* (TOMPA) for the disposal of garbage
- be written in English and, if the vessel is owned or operated in a foreign country, the working language of the vessel's crew.



Sewage

The discharge of sewage from vessels contributes to reduced water quality, poses a human health risk and decreases visual aesthetics of waterways.

Vessel operators and owners must adopt onboard management measures if sewage is likely to be generated, particularly for class 1 ships.

There are simple measures you can take to minimise the risk of sewage being illegally discharged into the sea.

- Know the location of the vessel and be aware of legislated nil discharge areas.
- Ensure that the appropriate valves are closed or opened to direct toilet waste to the sullage tanks instead of overboard. If unsure, always assume the ship is in a nil discharge area until the skipper is consulted.
- Always obtain permission from the skipper before emptying sullage tanks.



Ship-sourced sewage

The following table outlines discharge restrictions in Queensland waters. Please refer to the smooth and partially smooth water limit maps in the appendix at the end of this book.

<p>Prohibited discharge</p>	<p>Prohibited discharge waters</p> <p>No discharge of treated and untreated sewage in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a boat harbour • a canal • a marina • a buffer zone or a protection zone under the <i>Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 1997</i>. • Noosa River • areas designated as prohibited discharge areas which are depicted on specific maps on the Maritime Safety Queensland website (www.msq.qld.gov.au). <p>Declared ships (class 1 commercial ships) must have a sewage holding device if operating in areas where discharge is not permitted.</p>
<p>Untreated sewage</p>	<p>Nil discharge waters</p> <p>In those waters where discharge of sewage is permitted, sewage discharged from all boats with a fixed toilet must first pass through a macerator.</p> <p>Smooth waters (includes rivers, creeks and designated smooth waters)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil discharge <p>Hervey Bay and northern Moreton Bay waters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil discharge within 1 nautical mile from reefs, aquaculture fisheries resources and the mean low water mark of an island or the mainland for vessels with 1-15 persons on board. • For vessels with 16 or more persons on board – no discharge allowed. • Declared ships – nil discharge. <p>Open waters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all ships – nil discharge within 1 (nm) of aquaculture fisheries resources or within ½ (nm) of a wharf or jetty (other than a jetty that is a marina) • For ships with 7-15 persons on board nil discharge within 1(nm) of a reef or mean low water mark of an island or mainland. • For ships with 16 or more persons onboard – nil discharge in all Queensland coastal waters.
<p>Treated sewage</p>	<p>In those waterways where discharge of sewage is permitted, sewage discharged from all ships with a fixed toilet must first pass through a macerator.</p> <p>Smooth, Hervey Bay and northern Moreton Bay and open waters</p> <p>Treated sewage can be discharged subject to the following restrictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade C treated sewage – nil discharge within ½ (nm) of a person in the water, aquaculture resources or a reef. • Grade B treated sewage – nil discharge within 700 metres of a person in the water, aquaculture resources or a reef. • Grade A treated sewage – no restrictions other than prohibited discharge waters. <p>Declared ships (class 1) must have a sewage holding device suitable for the number of persons onboard and the duration of the journey in those waters if operating in waters where discharge is not permitted.</p>

Declared ships are required to have a shipboard sewage management plan onboard with particulars described in Division 3 of the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Regulation 2008 and to keep sewage disposal records when discharging to a sewage disposal facility.

All declared vessels with a treatment system are required to carry onboard system maintenance, assessment and service manuals and service records.



Reporting pollution

All marine pollution incidents must be reported to the nearest Maritime Safety Queensland regional office as soon as possible. This report should detail:

- when and where the pollution occurred
- what type of substance was discharged
- extent of the pollution
- name, size and type of vessel
- any other relevant information.

Mariners must be constantly vigilant against pollution risks from their vessel. Even routine operations such as refuelling or pumping the bilges can result in a serious pollution incident.

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