

Circular From GARD

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Asian Gypsy Moth - it's that time of the year again

Spring marks the beginning of the Asian Gypsy Moth (AGM) risk period in many countries. Heightened vessel surveillance for AGM commenced on 9 January 2017 in Australian ports while 1 March 2017 marks the start of the period identified as the “AGM risk period” in Western Canadian ports.

AGM is an exotic pest with established populations only in countries in the Asia Pacific, such as Russia, China, Korea, and Japan. If introduced in countries where it does not exist naturally, it has the potential to seriously affect the country's agricultural and forest resources. Adult moths frequently lay their egg masses on vessels and shipping containers, and since these egg clusters often survive to hatch at ports of call around the world, exclusion efforts are considered a priority by many local port authorities.

Countries currently known to regulate and inspect arriving vessels for AGM are: the *United States (US), Canada, Chile, Australia and New Zealand*. However, even if these countries agree on the objectives of AGM regulation, there are still differences in the requirements and port-of-entry processes between the countries.

Information for the 2017 AGM season

Gard's "[Frequently asked questions - managing Asian Gypsy Moth risks](#)" was updated on 24 February 2017 and, in addition to providing answers to some of the questions raised by our Members and clients, it summarises the requirements set forth by each of the regulating countries and provides links to relevant government websites. The following should be noted:

- Canada and the US issued this year's [Joint AGM Industry Notice](#) in February 2017 and continue to require vessels that, in the past 24 months, were in one of the regulated areas during the specified risk period, to present a valid pre-departure certificate.
- Canada also published a [policy clarification on Canadian AGM requirements](#) on 23 January 2017, stating that inspection and certification for AGM is required in Canadian ports also if vessels have called only at bunkering locations in the Asian Pacific areas regulated for AGM - including those at anchorage sites.
- The US revised its [special procedures for ships arriving from areas with AGM](#) on 1 December 2016.
- Australia announced in its [Notice to Industry 121-2016](#) that the heightened vessel surveillance window for the country's ports commenced on 9 January 2017 and that related inspection activities are expected to conclude on 31 May 2017.
- Australia also launched its new Maritime Arrivals Reporting System ([MARS](#)) during 2016, which is an online web portal to be used by commercial vessel Masters and shipping agents to submit pre-arrival documents required of all international vessels seeking Australian biosecurity clearance.

- New Zealand [extended its list of regulated areas](#) in the Asia Pacific prior to the 2016 AGM flight season and continues to require vessels that, in the past 12 months, were in one of these regulated areas during the specified risk period, to present a valid pre-departure certificate.
- Chile's definition of regulated areas includes [ports located between 20° and 60° N latitude](#) and may therefore include southern ports in the Asia Pacific that are not regulated by some of the other countries.

Recommendations

Members and clients with vessels calling ports in East Russia, Japan, Korea, and Northern China are advised to remind their Masters of the approaching AGM flight seasons. The importance of arriving in regulating countries free of AGM and of providing port officials with the required AGM documentation prior to arrival should be emphasised and instructions for proper AGM self-inspections en route should be made available onboard.

Guides for conducting vessel self-inspections have been published by various authorities and are available to download, examples are the Canadian authorities' "[Inspect Before Entry](#)" and US authorities' "[Gypsy Moth Inspectional Pocket Guide](#)". The guides provide helpful instructions to vessel crews on what the egg masses look like, where they might be found onboard the vessels, and how the eggs should be removed and destroyed.

A printer friendly pdf-version of Gard's FAQ on managing AGM risks is available [here](#).

Source of Information: Gard P&I Club