

Circular From GARD**Date: 26 April 2018**

Get ready for New Zealand's new biofouling requirements

New Zealand releases guidance on how international vessels can comply with the country's new biofouling requirements which enter into force on 15 May 2018.

New Zealand is known for its unique nature and marine environments and has strict biosecurity requirements for arriving vessels and will soon become the first country in the world to introduce a nationwide standard for biofouling. New Zealand's new biofouling requirements becomes mandatory as of 15 May 2018 and from this date, vessel operators must demonstrate that they have managed biofouling on their vessels well before arriving in New Zealand waters.

The mandatory biofouling requirements are contained within New Zealand's Craft Risk Management Standard (CRMS) for biofouling which has been available since May 2014. The standard aims to reduce biofouling by requiring vessels to take preventative measures and maintain a clean hull before arriving in New Zealand. Compliance with the CRMS can be achieved in several ways, including:

- cleaning of the hull within 30 days prior to arrival in New Zealand; or
- conducting continual hull maintenance using best practice principles, such as those detailed in the IMO Biofouling Guidelines; or
- conducting hull treatment using an MPI-approved provider within 24 hours of arriving in New Zealand

The definition of a 'clean hull' and the respective thresholds for permitted presence of biofouling depends on a vessel's itinerary, such as the areas in New Zealand to be visited and the length of the vessel's stay. However, regardless of the type of vessel, itinerary or compliance option selected, proper record keeping is key in order to demonstrate to the relevant authorities in New Zealand that a vessel has properly managed its biofouling risk.

Preparations and guidance

It is important to plan well ahead for arrival in New Zealand as many of the country's biosecurity requirements call for preparatory actions to be taken, such as exchange of ballast water mid-ocean, offshore inspection to ascertain that the vessel is free from Asian gypsy moths, and, from 15 May 2015, the management of biofouling on vessels' hulls. Members and clients trading in this region must therefore be familiar with New Zealand's biosecurity requirements and should revisit and update existing onboard procedures (e.g. biofouling management plan) to ensure compliance also with the new biofouling requirements.

A step by step guidance on the process of readying a vessel for arrival in New Zealand can be found on the New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries' (MPI) website: [Vessels - Arrival process steps](#). The MPI has also established a separate website on [Biofouling Management](#) that contains links to the actual requirements, the CRMS on biofouling, as well as to an updated Guidance document for the CRMS and a very useful Frequently asked questions document. A Technical guidance on biofouling management is also available together with a Guidance for self-assessing a vessel's risk profile.

For more information about biofouling, see also our update "[Biofouling moves up the regulatory agenda](#)" of 24 October 2017. In this article we also covered California's Biofouling Management Regulations which entered into force in October 2017.

Source of Information: Gard P&I Club