



TECHNICAL CIRCULAR No. 339 of 4th May 2016

To:	All Surveyors/Auditors
Applicable to flag:	All Flags
Subject:	IMO Restricts Sewage Discharge in Baltic Sea
Reference:	IMO's Marine Environment Protection

IMO Restricts Sewage Discharge in Baltic Sea

In addition to new provisions on fuel efficiency reporting and an update on ballast water management rules, the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee meeting also took action on sewage discharge in the Baltic Sea.

Newbuild passenger ships with keels laid after June 1, 2019 will not be permitted to discharge sewage waste within the Baltic Sea Special Area. It will be the first sea region in the world with an overall sewage discharge ban.

The provision will go into effect for existing passenger vessels on June 1, 2021 – except for those vessels headed for Russian ports and for vessels departing the area without other port calls, which will have until June 1, 2023.

If a passenger vessel has an approved sewage treatment plant, meeting all IMO standards, it may discharge its effluent in the Baltic after treatment.

HELCOM (Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission – Helsinki Commission), which had submitted the proposal to MEPC, hailed the decision, and described it as the culmination of 35 years of work. The regional organization said that the restrictions would bring regulation of cruise ship and ferry discharges in line with those for municipalities – an apt comparison, as Helsinki alone sees seven million passenger-nights from tourists on cruise ships, HELCOM said, an indicator of the volume of sewage discharged at sea.

Baltic States wished to regulate the effluent because the nitrogen and phosphorus contained in ship sewage aggravate the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea.

IMO and HELCOM would have to work on getting all Baltic States to join in the effort.

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REFERENCES:

- IMO's Marine Environment Protection

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