



TECHNICAL CIRCULAR No. 610 of 8th February 2020

To	All Surveyors/Auditors
Applicable to flag	All Flags
Title	Sewage Treatment Plants
Reference	MARPOL An. IV

MARPOL Annex IV: Sewage Treatment Plants

In 2014, some vessels were issued deficiencies and detained for untreated sewage pumped into non-approved holding tanks and for defective or non-operational STPs. At the time, it was feared that not enough attention was being paid to crew training and familiarization with these systems or to their operation and maintenance. Concerns were also voiced at the IMO. The Netherlands shared its sampling survey results showing that:

The majority of ships sampled were discharging effluents from their approved sewage treatment plants that did not meet the requirements and that this issue was linked not only to the type approval process but also to maintenance and enforcement.

Recently, MEPC 74 considered a proposal (MEPC 74/14) from Norway to revise MARPOL Annex IV and its associated guidelines. The proposal's primary intent was to introduce a monitoring and control mechanism for sewage treatment plant performance.

Though the proposal was generally supported, there were divergent views. Some advocated for a better understanding of the proposal's impacts on existing ships. Others asserted that amending MARPOL Annex IV constituted a new output necessitating further scientific justification and impact analysis. New equipment retrofit costs and the potential administrative burden placed on crew for additional record-keeping requirements were also concerns.

MEPC 74 decided to refer the issue to the PPR Sub-Committee. PPR 7 has been tentatively scheduled for 17–21 March 2020. In the meantime, the Administrator encourages all stakeholders, including RMI-flagged owners and operators, to share their views on stricter regulation of the issue in preparation for the further deliberations.

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REFERENCES:

- MARPOL An. IV
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Kindest Regards,

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