



NEWS BRIEF

PPR 13



NEWS BRIEF: PPR 13

The IMO Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR) held its 13th session from February 9 to 13, 2026. This Brief provides an overview of the more significant issues progressed at this session.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Regulatory measures on EGCS discharge water
- Amendments to the NO_x Technical Code for certification of engines that operate on carbon-containing and/or non-carbon-containing fuels
- The 'polar fuels' concept for reducing Arctic Black Carbon
- Revised IBTS Guidelines and Amendments to the IOPP Certificate and Oil Record Book

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PREVENTION OF AIR POLLUTION FROM SHIPS

Reduction of the Impact on the Arctic of Emissions of Black Carbon (BC) from International Shipping

In October 2024, MEPC 82 adopted Resolution MEPC.393(82) – *Guidance on best practice on recommendatory goal-based control measures to reduce the impact on the arctic of black carbon emissions from international shipping*, which is intended to assist ship operators/companies in their efforts to reduce BC emissions from their ships operating in or near the Arctic. MEPC 82 also adopted Resolution MEPC.394(82) – *Guidelines on recommendatory black carbon emission measurement, monitoring and reporting*, providing recommendations for the measurement, monitoring and reporting of BC emissions data from marine diesel engines or exhaust gas treatment systems.

In January 2025, PPR 12 invited interested Member States and international organizations to submit proposals to PPR 13 on the "polar fuels" concept, which could be supported by scientific studies and findings from BC measurement campaigns using the measurement reporting protocol set out in resolution MEPC.394(82).

Continuing the work from PPR 12, the Sub-Committee discussed the further development of the "polar fuels" concept in the context of reducing the impact on the Arctic of BC emissions from international shipping.

During the discussion, it was stressed that the proposed polar fuel concept should not be considered as the only solution to address BC formation in the Arctic, but rather as a first step, before considering other possible solutions included on the list set out in resolution MEPC.393(82), such as control-measures or after-treatment technologies. The claimed benefits of the concept were also questioned due to the relatively small impact of BC emissions from shipping in comparison to other sources and the importance of other factors such as engine load in the formation of BC. Concerns were also raised regarding the potential technical and implementation overlay of a polar fuel standard with the existing HFO ban and established ECAs covering the Arctic region.

Additionally, it was clarified that the "polar fuels" concept would only apply to liquid fuel oil derived from petroleum refining, consequently excluding all gaseous and low flashpoint fuels, such as ethanol, methanol and LNG.

Next Steps: Member States and International Organizations are invited to submit further proposals to PPR 14 (Spring 2027).

Evaluation and harmonization of rules and guidance on the discharge of discharge water from Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (EGCS)

Updates on the development of a database containing local/regional restrictions/conditions on the discharge water from EGCS

A new dedicated tab on "EGCS Discharge Water Provisions" was added in the GISIS "MARPOL Annex VI" module to enable Member States to submit information on local/regional restrictions/conditions on the discharge water from EGCS, and Member States were invited to submit information on local/regional restrictions/conditions on the discharge water from EGCS using the new dedicated tab.

Updates on the re-establishment of the GESAMP Task Team on EGCS for the consideration of emission factors for use in the environmental risk assessment of the discharge water from EGCS

The Task Team was re-established to work on the requested activities from MEPC 83, proposing a standard methodology for development of the data sets and calculation of the emission factors for a representative and universal set of emission factors, including best practices.



Identification and development as appropriate of regulatory measures and instruments on discharge water from EGCS

With more than 45 countries having adopted national discharge restrictions, concerns were raised regarding the increasing regulatory fragmentation and the urgent need for harmonization of EGCS discharge water restrictions through amendments to MARPOL Annex VI.

A proposal to amend regulation 4 of MARPOL Annex VI to allow coastal States to request additional associated protective measures (APMs) to restrict EGCS discharges in Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA) prompted divergent views, noting the absence of sufficient robust, peer-reviewed scientific evidence of the negative impacts of EGCS discharge water on water quality, as well as the potential financial and economic impact.

The Sub-Committee recommended that MEPC invite those Member States considering applications for the designation of PSSAs to assess the relevance of an EGCS-related associated protective measure (APM), when formulating and submitting a PSSA proposal.

Considering the extension of the target completion date of the output until 2027, the Sub-Committee invited interested Member States and international organizations to consult intersessionally and submit new proposals on appropriate measures to control discharges of EGCS discharge water to PPR 14 (Spring 2027).

Proposal to initiate a process to evaluate the efficacy of EGCS at reducing particulate matter (PM) emissions

As studies submitted at MEPC 83 suggest that ships using scrubbers and HFO produce higher PM and Black Carbon emissions than compliant low-sulphur fuel, a proposal to evaluate the efficacy of scrubbers currently in operation on ships at reducing particulate matter emissions compared to low sulphur fuel was considered. However, since the proposal did not fall within the current scope of work for EGCS output, the Sub-Committee invited interested Member States to submit a proposal for a new output or for revising the scope of the output at a future MEPC session.

Review of NO_x emission requirements in MARPOL Annex VI and the NO_x Technical Code 2008L

MEPC 83 included a new output on "Review and development of NO_x emission requirements in MARPOL Annex VI and the NO_x Technical Code 2008", with a view to addressing concerns about high NO_x emissions from Tier II and Tier III compliant ships and ensuring that the standards achieved the intended emission reductions. PPR 13 initiated the review of NO_x emission requirements in MARPOL Annex VI and the NO_x Technical Code 2008 around the following points:

1. Engine Test Cycles and weighting factors;
2. Onboard verification method(s) for NO_x compliance and facilitation of onboard inspections, including port State control;
3. Determination of SCR operational status and associated response procedures.

Engine Test Cycles and weighting factors

During the discussion, concerns were raised regarding high NO_x emissions at low engine load, and it was noted that AIS data analysis in various geographical regions showed substantial operation at low load, including in port areas. It was also recognized that multiple independent studies had found that engines operate at lower loads more frequently than implied by the E2/E3 test cycles. The addition of a new low load point to the current test cycles and readjustment of the weighting factors based on actual loads during operation was supported as an effective approach to address this issue.

However, concerns were expressed about adding low load points to the test cycles and readjusting the weighting factors, noting that more data and analysis would be necessary to understand global trend of actual loads during



operation across type of engines. The feasibility of this approach, particularly its potential impacts on fuel consumption, GHG emissions, administrative burden and operating costs also need consideration.

Following deliberations, it was noted that there was broad support to addressing the issue of NO_x emissions at low engine load. However, a preferred approach could not be identified among those submitted to this session, and therefore it was agreed that intersessional work was needed to identify possible ways forward and better understand the implications of various approaches.

Onboard verification method(s) for NO_x compliance and facilitation of onboard inspections, including port State control (PSC).

During the discussion, there was broad support for exploring practical ways to demonstrate NO_x compliance and facilitate onboard inspections, including PSC.

Further development of the concept of using the "electronic diagnostic module" (EDM) to ensure that the engine performs as it was certified was supported. As the current parameter check method is inadequate for electronically controlled engines without very detailed inspections, EDM-generated reports could aid PSC inspections, reduce the need for spot checks, and improve reliability compared to relying solely on the Technical File.

It was noted that the 2025 SCR Guidelines allow three different methods for checking SCR catalyst deterioration, but these methods vary in robustness. It was further emphasized that having multiple methods to demonstrate compliance creates challenges in verifying NO_x emissions, as PSC officers find it difficult to become familiar with the different types of onboard documentation.

While the current framework was generally considered robust and should be retained, including the engine parameter check method, it was acknowledged that updates might be needed to reflect electronically controlled engines.

Following consideration, a preferred approach could not be identified, and it was agreed that intersessional work was needed to identify possible ways forward and better understand the implications of various approaches.

Determination of SCR operational status and associated response procedure

During the discussion, there was broad support for developing further guidance to provide clarity and consistency for ships, crews and Administrations in determining SCR operational status and associated response procedures, including reporting requirements in case of SCR malfunction.

It was agreed that in order to ensure technology neutrality, any further guidance should cover all NO_x control arrangements. Nevertheless, it was noted that priority should be given to clarifying ways to determine compliance in the 2025 SCR Guidelines.

Review and development of draft amendments to the NO_x Technical Code (NTC) on certification of engines that operate on non-carbon-containing fuel or mixtures of carbon-containing and non-carbon-containing fuels

The Sub-Committee considered proposals and information related to review and amendment of the NTC 2008 to provide a means for certification of engines that operate on non-carbon-containing fuel or mixtures of carbon-containing and non-carbon-containing fuels. It was recognized that the current carbon balance method in the NTC would not work for fuels with less than 66% carbon by mass. The proposed approach includes the addition of hydrogen-balance and oxygen-balance procedures to determine exhaust gas mass flowrate, along with supporting amendments to the NTC.

However, the urgency of developing procedures in the NTC was stressed in order to enable engine manufacturers to certify dual fuel marine diesel engines operating on non-carbon-containing fuels such as ammonia (NH₃) or hydrogen (H₂).



The Sub-Committee agreed to draft amendments to the NTC, including default values for the u_{gas} coefficient (ratio of exhaust component and exhaust gas densities) for ammonia and hydrogen. It was clarified that the values would apply to fuel mixtures with a hydrogen-to-carbon ratio ≤ 4.0 .

Next Steps: The draft amendments are to be submitted to MEPC 84 (April 2026) for approval and subsequent adoption at MEPC 85 (November 2026).

Unified interpretation of MARPOL Annex VI

Unified interpretation (UI) of regulation 16.9 of MARPOL Annex VI

The Sub-Committee agreed to a new UI of Regulation 16.9 of MARPOL Annex V to clarify requirements to be verified during shipboard incinerator type approval testing, and requirements that apply to onboard monitoring. It was clarified that the requirement for the batch-loaded incinerators temperature in the actual combustion space where solid waste is combusted to reach 600 °C within five minutes after start-up is a design requirement to be verified during type approval testing only.

Next Steps: The UI is to be submitted to MEPC 84 (April 2026) for approval and eventual inclusion in a revision of MEPC.1/Circ.795/Rev.9.

Unified interpretation (UI) of regulation 13.2.3 of MARPOL Annex VI

The newly designated Norwegian Sea and North-East Atlantic Emission Control Area (ECA) (which are expected to be adopted at MEPC 84) use the three-date criteria system, instead of the keel laying date used in the existing NO_x ECAs. This could potentially lead to discrepancies in determining the construction date for vessels built around the time of the implementation of the new ECAs using the three-date criteria and could have an effect on determining emission requirements for subsequent engine conversions.

The Sub-Committee agreed to a new UI of regulation 13.2.3 of MARPOL Annex VI, to clarify how the application date for a major conversion according to regulations 13.2.1.2 or 13.2.1.3 should be applied in the case of a new ECAs using the three date criteria, as well as consequential amendments to the existing UI of regulation 13.2.2 on the "Time of replacement of an engine".

For the application of regulation 13.2.3.2 (major conversion of engines), the three dates application criteria based on the building contract date, or in absence of a building contract the keel laying date, or the delivery date should be used to determine "the time the ship was constructed", without prejudice to the definition of "ship constructed" as set out in regulation 2.1.28.

Next Steps: The new UI of regulation 13.2.3 of MARPOL Annex VI and the draft revised UI of regulation 13.2.2 are to be submitted to MEPC 84 (April 2026) for approval and are to be included in a revision of MEPC.1/Circ.795/Rev.9.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) emissions

With a view to reducing VOC emissions from international shipping, the Sub-Committee agreed to draft amendments to regulation 15 of MARPOL Annex VI and consequential amendments to the Form of International Air Pollution Prevention (IAPP) Certificate, to require new crude oil tankers to be fitted with P/V valves with a minimum opening pressure of 0.20 bar.

It was noted that the date for effective application of the new requirement would correspond to the date of entry into force of the said amendments.



Next Steps: The draft amendments are to be submitted to MEPC 84 (April 2026) for approval and subsequent adoption at MEPC 85 (November 2026).

MARINE BIOSAFETY

Development of a legally binding framework for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species

In April 2023, MEPC 80 adopted resolution MEPC.378(80) – *2023 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species* (2023 Biofouling Guidelines). In April 2025, MEPC 83 approved MEPC.1/Circ.918 – *Guidance on in-water cleaning of ships' biofouling* (IWC Guidance) and agreed to include an output on "Development of a legally binding framework for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species".

The Sub-Committee agreed that the legally binding framework would take the form of standalone instrument, based on the view that the benefits of this approach outweighed those of an amendment to an existing instrument. A stepwise, goal-based and risk-based approach was broadly supported. This could include a consideration of control points, to ensure the framework is practical, implementable, enforceable, and flexible enough to include detailed provisions where needed.

The Sub-Committee finalized the terms of reference of the output, which had been approved in principle by MEPC 83, and invited MEPC 84 to approve them. A correspondence group (CG) was established to progress the development of the legally binding framework with the following terms of reference:

1. Identify the objectives of the legally binding framework for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species;
2. Develop the draft structure of the framework, including a draft list of articles, regulations and appendices, taking into account resolution MEPC.378(80), MEPC.1/Circ.792, MEPC.1/Circ.918 and MSC.1/Circ.1394/Rev.2;
3. Identify a list of guidelines to be developed for the effective implementation of the legally binding framework;
4. Develop a draft work plan for the output;
5. Initiate the drafting of text for articles, regulations and appendices.

Next Steps: The work will continue intersessionally through the established CG and will be further considered at PPR 14 (Spring 2027).

MARINE PLASTIC LITTER FROM SHIPS

Review of the Strategy to address marine plastic litter from ships

As instructed by MEPC 83, the Sub-Committee conducted a review of the *Strategy to address marine plastic litter from ships*. The outcome of the review was combined with the 2025 Action Plan (resolution MEPC.404(83)) under a single draft MEPC resolution. It was agreed that a comprehensive review of the 2026 Strategy and the Action Plan, as well as a separate review of the actions in the Action Plan to ensure their currency and accuracy, should take place in 2030.

It was noted though, that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and remote locations such as the polar regions continue to face challenges when planning for the discharge of waste to land-based facilities. To reflect this, the provision in MARPOL Annex V that recognizes that countries which have Regional Reception Facility Plans in



place face unique challenges was incorporated in Section 5 of the strategy and was agreed to be further considered when addressing actions in the Action Plan.

The Group also agreed to remove the timeline of follow-up actions for the Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships as it was redundant and outdated.

Next Steps: The 2026 Strategy and Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships is to be submitted to MEPC 84 (April 2026) for approval.

Reduction of the environmental risk of the maritime transport of plastic pellets

Regarding the second stage of the agreed two-stage approach to address the environmental risk associated with the maritime transport of plastic pellets, the Sub-Committee continued the analysis of the appropriate instrument to be amended for mandatory measures. Broad support was noted on the need to ensure that plastic pellets were not considered a harmful substance or dangerous good as defined by the criteria in the appendix to MARPOL Annex III. Following considerations of the advantages, limitations and impacts relating to amendments to mandatory instruments for each proposed approach, the potential instruments were limited to a new code for plastic pellets made mandatory through MARPOL Annex III, or SOLAS or both.

The Sub-Committee also agreed that the provisions set out in MEPC.1/Circ.909 should form the basis of the new code, taking into consideration the experience gained from the voluntary circular.

Next Steps: The recommendation for a new code to be made mandatory under MARPOL Annex III, or SOLAS or both, using MEPC.1/Circ.909 as the basis, is to be submitted to MEPC 84 (April 2026), with a view to the Committee making a policy decision on the preferred mandatory instrument(s) to be amended.

Marking of fishing gear

With regard to marking of fishing gear, the Sub-Committee considered proposals for a draft MEPC circular to promote the implementation of systems for marking of fishing, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Voluntary Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear. Further proposals on draft amendments to MARPOL Annex V and associated guidelines for a goal-based fishing-gear marking requirement were considered. Although general support for a goal-based fishing gear marking requirement to address Abandoned, Lost, or Discarded Fishing Gear was noted, the need for flexibility and the potential implementation difficulties due to different national circumstances and the variation in fishery types, fishing vessel sizes, and fishing gear types, were highlighted.

The Sub-Committee agreed to a draft MEPC circular to promote the implementation of fishing gear marking systems and the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear (VGMFG).

Next Steps: The Sub-Committee agreed to the draft MEPC circular, with a view to approval by MEPC 84 (April 2026) and invited further submissions on the development of a goal-based requirement under MARPOL Annex V for the mandatory marking of fishing gear.

EVALUATION OF SAFETY AND POLLUTION HAZARDS OF CHEMICALS

Safety and pollution hazards of chemicals and preparation of consequential amendments to the IBC Code

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the 31st session of the Technical Group on the Evaluation of Safety and Pollution Hazards of Chemicals (ESPH 31) which had taken place in November 2025.



The outcome of the 62nd session of the Working Group on Evaluation of the Hazards of Harmful Substances (EHS) carried by ships (GESAMP/EHS 62) was noted, including the following:

1. The development of full GESAMP Hazard Profiles for 14 new substances
2. The outcomes of the review of GESAMP Hazard Profile ratings for five existing substances
3. The updated GESAMP/EHS Data Reporting Form

With regard to the provisional categorization of liquid substances carried out by ESPH 31, the Sub-Committee concurred with the evaluation of:

1. 44 products subject to the review called for by PPR.1/Circ.10, and their respective inclusion in the appropriate lists of MEPC.2/Circ.31 (published on 1 December 2025), with validity for all countries and with no expiry date, along with the consequential additions to List 5 of MEPC.2/Circ.31
2. 16 products that were being shipped under provisional assessments expiring in 2025 and their inclusion in the appropriate lists of MEPC.2/Circ.31, with validity for all countries and with no expiry date, along with the
3. Consequential additions to List 5 of MEPC.2/Circ.31
4. Revised carriage requirements for eight existing entries in chapter 17 of the IBC Code and the consequential addition of new entries in List 1 of MEPC.2/Circ.31, with validity for all countries and no expiry date, as follows:
 - a. Fatty acid methyl esters (m) (amended)
 - b. Coconut oil fatty acid methyl ester (m) (amended)
 - c. Palm oil fatty acid methyl ester (amended)
 - d. Rape seed oil fatty acid methyl esters (amended)
 - e. Soybean oil fatty acid methyl ester (amended)
 - f. Polyacrylic acid solution (48% or less)
 - g. Potassium hydroxide solution (amended)
 - h. Sodium hydroxide solution (amended)
5. Products submitted to ESPH 31 not expiring in 2025 and their respective inclusion in Lists 1, 2 and 3 of MEPC.2/Circ.31, as appropriate, with validity for all countries and with no expiry date, along with the consequential additions to List 5 of MEPC.2/Circ.31.

Concerns were noted regarding when biofuel blends should be treated as MARPOL Annex I or Annex II cargoes.

Evaluation of cleaning additives

The Sub-Committee concurred with the evaluation by ESPH 31 of cleaning additives and noted their inclusion in annex 10 to MEPC.2/Circ.31. It was noted that due to time constraints, ESPH 31 had agreed to consider the development of a timeline for the re-evaluation of existing cleaning additives at a future session and had invited submission of related documents.

Review of the MEPC.2 circular on Provisional categorization of liquid substances in accordance with MARPOL Annex II and the IBC Code and the review of products in Lists 2, 3 and 4 of the MEPC.2 circular

The Sub-Committee noted the review undertaken by ESPH 31 of the draft of MEPC.2/Circ.31 and the amendments and deletion of products from the lists that had reached their expiry dates or were no longer shipped. The Sub-Committee also noted the completion of the review of products in Lists 2, 3 and 4 of the MEPC.2 circular and agreed to the draft revised PPR.1/Circ.10, with a view to endorsement by MEPC 84.

Circular raw material

The Sub-Committee discussed the appropriate classification of circular raw material, i.e. liquefied polymers, which is currently listed under a provisional tripartite agreement with an expiry date of 31 December 2027. Divergent views were expressed on the most appropriate carriage requirements for oils generated from waste products, including pyrolysis oils derived from feedstocks such as plastic waste and used tires, either under MARPOL Annex I or generic entries with ranges of compositions and properties under MARPOL Annex II cargoes.



Recognizing the need for additional data on the composition of these products, the Group invited interested Member States and international organizations to submit proposals or information on the classification of these products to the next session of the ESPH Technical Group.

Amendments to MARPOL Annex II in order to improve the effectiveness of cargo tank stripping, tank washing operations and prewash procedures for products with a high melting point and/or high viscosity

In January 2025, PPR 12 had considered the progress made by ESPH 30 on proposed amendments in MARPOL Annex II aiming to improve the effectiveness of cargo tank stripping, tank washing operations and prewash procedures for products with a high melting point and/or high viscosity. At this session, the Sub-Committee considered further progress made by ESPH 31 and noted the concerns expressed regarding the availability of adequate port reception facilities.

During the discussion, there was general support for a proposal to amend the format of the Cargo Record Book for ships carrying noxious liquid substances in bulk as provided in appendix II of MARPOL Annex II to enhance the management of the discharge of tank washings and ballast water from cargo tanks. Recording the location and speed of the vessel during discharge and tank washing operations would assist port and coastal States in verifying compliance with the discharge requirements of MARPOL Annex II.

However, concerns were expressed regarding the potential for increased administrative and operational burdens on seafarers, particularly noting the risks of error associated with manual notation.

Next steps: Finally, the Sub-Committee instructed the ESPH Technical Group to further consider the proposed amendments and advise the Sub-Committee on the way forward.

Establishment of the Technical Group on Evaluation of Safety and Pollution Hazards of Chemicals

The Sub-Committee established the Technical Group on Evaluation of Safety and Pollution Hazards of Chemicals and instructed it to:

1. Consider pending documents from ESPH 31 regarding the evaluation of products
2. Conduct an evaluation of cleaning additives submitted to this session
3. Consider the development of a timeline for the re-evaluation of existing cleaning additives

Unified interpretation of paragraph 7.1.5.4 of the IBC Code

The Sub-Committee considered a proposal for a draft unified interpretation to paragraph 7.1.5.4 of the IBC Code to clarify that cargo temperature alarm settings should take into account both the temperature at which hazardous reactions of the cargo may occur and the temperature limits required to ensure that any added inhibitor remains effective throughout the voyage.

In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that amendments to the IBC Code including the Certificate of Protection might be required and that the proposal could benefit from other Sub-Committees' review. Concerns were raised about whether the required safeguards are met and about the operational challenges for crews on ships with limited technical means to actively control cargo temperature.

Next Step: The Sub-Committee instructed the ESPH Technical Group to further consider this proposal taking into account the comments raised.

Review of the IBTS Guidelines and Amendments to the IOPP Certificate and Oil Record Book



Amendments to MARPOL Annex I

At previous MEPC sessions, the Committee agreed in principle that forced evaporation is an acceptable means for the disposal of oily bilge water and invited proposals to amend MARPOL Annex I accordingly. The Sub-Committee subsequently drafted amendments to MARPOL Annex I, including a draft new regulation 12B “Oily bilge water holding tanks and oily bilge water service tanks” to introduce the requirements for the forced evaporation of oily bilge water, primarily applicable to ships fitted with an integrated bilge water treatment system (IBTS), comprising an oily bilge water holding tank (or similar) and an oily bilge water service tank (or similar).

Given that IBTS is an optional system fitted on board, the new regulation should base applicability on the installation date of the equipment rather than the ship delivery date. The new regulation applies to every ship of 400 gross tonnage and above, fitted with an IBTS with an installation date on or after the entry-into-force date (EIF) for ships constructed after the EIF date, and an installation date after the EIF + 48 months for equipment installed on ships delivered after the EIF date. For existing IBTS installations prior to the EIF date, the regulation need only be applied as far as is reasonable and practicable.

Consequential amendments were also developed for appendix II (Form of the IOPP Certificate and Supplements) and appendix III (Form of the Oil Record Book) to reflect the transfer to the section 3.1 tank, and evaporation options for oily bilge water from the oily bilge water service tank, and/or other 3.3 listed tanks as listed in the IOPPC and the Oil Record Book.

Next Step: The Sub-Committee agreed to the draft amendments, with a view to approval by MEPC 84 (April 2026) and subsequent adoption at MEPC 85 (November 2026).

Draft revised IBTS Guidelines

The Sub-Committee recalled that, at PPR 7, it had prepared the draft MEPC circular on the *2020 Guidelines for systems for handling oily wastes in machinery spaces of ships incorporating guidance*, and it was agreed to update them, incorporating guidance notes for an integrated bilge water treatment system (IBTS).

Definitions were introduced for IBTS, forced evaporation, and oily bilge water service tank, amendments to clarify to which system the integral pump is connected to, if fitted; and a new paragraph added concerning the oily bilge water service tank. With regard to the oil residue (sludge) service tank it was agreed to incorporate the additional options for heating which facilitates gravitational settling and forced evaporation. It was further agreed that the existing 15 ppm bilge alarm may be used, without excluding the installation of an additional alarm depending on the ship's design. The maximum temperature of the oily bilge water in the oily bilge water service tank is to be 105°C to ensure effective evaporation. The typical flow diagram of the IBTS was updated in relation to the oily bilge water section and consequential adjustments were made to the oil residues (sludge) section. Finally, the format of the Statement of Fact on installation of an IBTS was updated accordingly.

Next Step: The draft *2026 Guidelines for systems for handling oily wastes in machinery spaces of ships incorporating guidance notes for an integrated bilge water treatment system (IBTS)* will be submitted for approval by MEPC 84 (April 2026) in conjunction with the adoption of the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex I.

Draft revised Oil Record Book (ORB) Guidance

Further to the amendments to MARPOL Annex I and the draft revised IBTS Guidelines, amendments were made to the draft revised *Guidance for the recording of operations in the Oil Record Book (ORB) Part I – Machinery Space Operations (all ships)*.

In particular, it was agreed to remove example #10-1, under the section on usage of code D, regarding the bilge separation unit for maintenance purposes. As a consequence of the amendments introduced in the revised IBTS Guidelines, new examples #12bis and #13bis were introduced under the section on usage of code D, relating to the



pumping of bilge water to clean bilge holding tank through 15 ppm equipment and disposal of bilge water by forced evaporation, respectively. In addition, a new example #20bis was added under the section on usage of code I, concerning the pumping of clean bilge water overboard from clean bilge holding tank through a 15 ppm bilge alarm.

Next Step: The revised *Guidance for recording of operations in the Oil Record Book Part I – Machinery space operations (all ships)* are to be submitted for approval by MEPC 84 (April 2026) in conjunction with the adoption of the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex I.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Revision of MARPOL Annex IV and associated Guidelines

Building on the work carried out in the previous sessions and intersessionally, the Sub-Committee considered the report of the Correspondence Group on Amendments to MARPOL Annex IV and Associated Guidelines.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the *Guidelines for the use of electronic record books under MARPOL* (resolution MEPC.312(74)) should be amended to incorporate the Sewage Record Book after the adoption of the revised MARPOL Annex IV.

In principle, the Sub-Committee also agreed to:

- Draft amendments to MARPOL Annex IV concerning the Sewage Record Book (SRB) (draft regulation 11A and appendix III) and draft guidance for the recording of operations in the SRB
- Draft amendments to MARPOL Annex IV concerning the Sewage Management Plan (SMP) (draft regulation 11B) and draft guidance for the development of SMP

These items will be subject to further review at a later stage when other relevant MARPOL Annex IV requirements and associated guidelines are closer to completion, including finalization of text related to performance tests and indicative monitoring.

Due to time constraints, a detailed discussion on the draft Type Approval Guidelines could not be conducted and the remaining draft amendments to MARPOL Annex IV could not be considered. As a result, the Sub-Committee agreed to re-establish the Correspondence Group on Revision of MARPOL Annex IV and Associated Guidelines, to progress the work intersessionally, with the following terms of reference:

1. Further develop the draft revised MARPOL Annex IV, other than requirements concerning the SRB and SMP;
2. Further develop draft amendments to the *2012 Guidelines on implementation of effluent standards and performance tests for sewage treatment plants* (Type Approval Guidelines)
3. Further develop the draft guidelines on the implementation of MARPOL Annex IV for sewage treatment plants (Implementation Guidelines)
4. Develop draft guidance on obtaining data with regard to the quality of treated sewage effluent

Next Steps: The work will continue intersessionally through the re-established Correspondence Group and will be further considered at PPR 14 (Spring 2027).

Other discussions

Revision of the revised guidelines and specifications for pollution prevention equipment for machinery space bilges of ships

MEPC 79 had included an output on "Revision of the *Revised guidelines and specifications for pollution prevention equipment for machinery space bilges of ships* (resolution MEPC.107(49)). The submissions at this session of PPR February 16, 2026



focused on the addition of a sampling interruption alarm function for the 15 ppm bilge alarm and restrictions on user adjustment of the time settings to ensure accurate recording of bilge water discharge data. Concerns were raised that the test fluids used in the type approval tests for the 15 ppm bilge separator and 15 ppm bilge alarm are no longer representative of the fuel oils, oily mixtures and chemicals typically found in bilge water and should be revised accordingly.

Next steps: The Sub-Committee agreed to establish a correspondence group to progress the work intersessionally and prepare a draft revision of the *Revised guidelines and specifications for pollution prevention equipment for machinery space bilges of ships* to be reported at PPR 14 (Spring 2027).

Ammonia effluent management from ammonia-fueled ships

At MEPC 83, PPR Sub-Committee was assigned with the output on "Development of guidelines for managing ammonia effluent generated from ammonia-fueled ships".

Recognizing the growing relevance of ammonia as a potential alternative marine fuel and the associated need to address management of ammonia-containing effluents, several options were discussed including controlled discharges permitted under specific conditions and even prohibition of ammonia effluent discharge. In order to allow time for data collection and technical preparation, the Sub-Committee invited interested parties to submit further proposals to PPR 14.

Carriage of cargo oil in the slop tank(s) of an oil tanker

The Sub-Committee recalled that clarifications regarding the carriage of cargo oil in the slop tank(s) of oil tankers, had been forwarded by PPR 13 for further consideration. The question has been raised whether the slop tank is specifically designated for the collection of tank drainings, tank washings and other oily mixtures as defined in MARPOL Annex I, regulation 1.16 and cannot be designated to carry cargo oil, or can carry cargo oil (subject to inclusion in the net tonnage calculations), as loading of the slop tank(s) is expected only in the ballast voyage upon tank washing/draining at the discharge port.

Given the absence of any specific requirements in MARPOL Annex I addressing the carriage of oil cargo in slop tanks, the Sub-Committee agreed that interested Member States should aim to develop a common understanding on this matter and consider proposing a draft unified interpretation or submitting a proposal to MEPC for a new output to amend MARPOL Annex I if they deemed it appropriate.

ABS RESOURCES

- ABS Regulatory News [\(link\)](#)
- ABS Safety in Minutes Video Series [\(link\)](#)
- ABS Remote Survey Services [\(link\)](#)
- ABS Port State Control Checklist [\(link\)](#)
- ABS Smart Scheduler™ Survey Booking Tool [\(link\)](#)
- ABS Rules and Guides [\(link\)](#)

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