

The State of Washington has laws and rules that regulate the discharge of ballast water in state waters.

Under laws administered by the state's Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), the owner or operator of a vessel three hundred gross tons or more, United States and foreign, capable of carrying ballast water to the state waters after operating outside of the waters of the state, shall:

- Submit a ballast water report to WDFW; and
- Discharge ballast water to state waters only if there has been an open sea exchange, or the vessel treated its ballast water prior to discharge using a treatment that meets standards adopted by the WDFW and federal laws.

A vessel that does not file a ballast water reporting form or discharges improperly exchanged or treated ballast water into waters of the state without a valid exemption, will result in a civil penalty up to \$27,500.

To receive the most up to date information, please access the WDFW ballast water management program web site at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/ballast/ballast.htm> or call WDFW at (360) 902-2700.

Ballast Water and Aquatic Invasive Species

Discharging ballast water and sediments in coastal waters can introduce aquatic invasive species and diseases that lead to major economic, health, and environmental problems. For example:

- Zebra mussels (introduced to the U.S. in the mid-1980s) have cost more than \$1 billion to control.
- Cholera and other bacteria and viruses can survive long-term inside ballast holding tanks. A recent study by the Smithsonian Institution found cholera in ballast water on 15 ships.
- More than 50 non-native aquatic species have been introduced to Puget Sound waters, including the European Green Crab and the Purple Varnish Clam, which threaten local shellfish populations. The experience of Great Lakes states shows that damage from these introductions cost millions of dollars each year.

WHY IT MATTERS

Discharging ballast water and sediments in coastal waters can introduce aquatic invasive species and diseases that lead to major economic, health, and environmental problems.

For ballast water information:

Department of Fish & Wildlife
ANS Unit: Ballast Water Mgmt Program
600 Capitol Way N
Olympia, WA 98501-1091
Phone: 360-902-2700
Fax: 360-902-2845
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/ballast/ballast.htm>

For water pollution information:

Washington Dept. of Ecology
Spill Prevention, Preparedness,
and Response Program
Spill Prevention Section
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
Phone: 360-407-7455
Fax: 360-407-7288
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/spills/spills.html>

Special accommodations:

If you need this publication in an alternate format, call the Spills Program at 360-407-7455. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

Basic Ballast Water Intake, Exchange, and Discharge Guidelines

Ballast Water Intake

- Avoid ballast operations in or near marine sanctuaries, marine preserves, marine parks, or coral reefs.
- Avoid or minimize ballast water uptake:
 - Where infestation, harmful organisms and pathogens are located.
 - Near sewage outfalls.
 - Near dredging operations.
 - Where tidal flushing is poor or when a tidal stream is known to be more turbid.
 - In darkness when organisms may rise up in the water column.
 - In shallow water or where propellers may stir up the sediment.
 - Areas with pods of whales, convergence zones and boundaries of major currents.
- Clean ballast tanks to remove sediment regularly.
- Rinse anchors and anchor chains during retrieval to remove organisms and sediments at their place of origin.
- Remove fouling organisms from hull, piping, and tanks on a regular basis and dispose of any removed substances in accordance with local, state and federal regulations.
- Maintain a vessel specific ballast water management plan.
- Train vessel personnel in ballast water and sediment management and treatment procedures.

Ballast Water Exchange

- Conduct an “Open Sea Exchange” to replace coastal ballast water with open-ocean water. This reduces the risk of spreading coastal aquatic invasive species to other coastal areas where they do not have the same population control factors such as predation and evolutionary competition. Current regulations require exchange:
 - To replace at least 95% of each tanks volume with open ocean water using either a flow-through or empty-refill process; and
 - Outside 200 nautical miles (nm) for vessels normally voyaging outside that distance; or
 - Outside 50 nm for vessels that do not voyage past the 200 nm distance.
- Clean anchors, cables, chain lockers, suction wells, fire main systems and other items that might retain contaminated water or sediment, when practicable.
- If exchanging ballast by the empty-refill method, we recommend that all of the water in a tank should be discharged until suction is lost. Use stripping pumps or eductors, if possible.
- For the flow-through method of exchange, at least three times the tank volume should be pumped through the tank. If you suspect your tank configuration or system does not provide for effective removal of coastal organisms, pump an additional one or two tank volumes through to be safe.
- Conduct exchanges as far outside regulatory limits as practicable.

- If ballast is suspected of containing sediment, flush the tank more than once before refilling or entering port. Ideally, strip and refill as opposed to purging.

Ballast Water Discharge

- Record ballast water discharge information and file your Ballast Water Reporting Form to the U.S. Coast Guard and WDFW at least 24 hours prior to expected arrival in port.
- Do not discharge ballast obtained outside Washington waters in Washington waters unless it is from “common waters” or open sea exchange has been conducted.
- Discharge only the minimum required for safe loading and other operations.

Safety Measures

The master or operator in charge of a vessel is responsible for the safety of the vessel, its crew, and its passengers. Nothing in Washington State law relieves the master or operator in charge of a vessel of the responsibility for ensuring the safety and stability of the vessel or the safety of the crew and passengers. In certain situations, the master or operator may file for a safety exemption with WDFW if an exchange or treatment was not possible. This does not absolve the vessel if a safety exemption was requested due to poor planning or other negligent factors.

For Information on International and Federal Requirements:

International Maritime Organization (IMO) Resolution A. 868(20), adopted 27 November 1997

United States Coast Guard circular, "Change-1 to the Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 07-04".