

Merchant Marine Circular

Panama Maritime Authority
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Control and Compliance Department

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-168

To: Owners/Operators of Panamanian Vessels, Recognized Organizations and Masters.

Subject: Approval of the Rate of Discharge for Untreated Sewage

Reference: Law No. 17 of November 9, 1981, adopting the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), 1973.
Law No. 1 of October 25, 1983, adopting the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), Protocol 1978.
Law No. 30 of March 26, 2003, adopting the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), Protocol 1997.
Resolution MEPC.157(55) adopted October 13, 2006; MARPOL Annex IV 11.1.1 (Only as recommendation).

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this Circular is to inform to all concerned parties our procedures to request the approval of rate of discharge for untreated sewage.

2. Definitions

2.1. *Swept volume* means ship breadth x draft x distance travelled.

2.2. *Untreated sewage* means sewage that has not been treated by a type approved sewage treatment plant, or that has not been comminuted and disinfected.

2.3. *Maximum permissible discharge* refers to the average rate as calculated over any 24 hour period, or the period of discharge if that less, and may be exceeded by no more than 20% when measured on an hourly basis.

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3. Rate of Discharge of Untreated Sewage from ships

- 3.1.** The Regulation 11.1.1 of the revised Annex IV of MARPOL 73/78 requires that untreated sewage, which may be discharged at more than 12 nautical miles from the nearest land, should not be discharged instantaneously but at a moderate rate of discharge, when the ship is “en route” and proceeding at a speed not less than 4 knots, while the rate of discharge shall be approved by the Administration.
- 3.2.** The standards developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for the approval and calculation of a moderate rate of discharge are established in the Resolution MEPC.157(55) adopted on 13 October 2006.
- 3.3.** The request to obtain such approval must be placed by email to authorizations@segumar.com and copy of the valid vessel’s International Sewage Pollution Prevention Certificate (ISPPC) shall be submitted.
- 3.4.** The Administration will approve the rate of discharge specified in MARPOL Annex IV Reg. 11.1.1 based upon the ship’s maximum summer draft and maximum service speed. Where sewage is to be discharged at a different combination of draft and speed one or more secondary discharge rates may also be approved. Presentation may be tabular, refer to the below table:

DISCHARGE RATE (m ³ /h)					
SPEED (kt)	4	6	8	10	12
DRAFT (m)					
5	4.63	6.94	9.26	11.57	13.89
6	5.56	8.33	11.11	13.89	16.67
7	6.48	9.72	12.96	16.20	19.45
8	7.41	11.11	14.82	18.52	22.22
9	8.33	12.50	16.67	20.83	25.00

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3.5. The maximum permissible discharge rate is 1/200,000 (or one 200,000th part) of swept volume as follows:

Where:

DR_{max} is maximum permissible discharge rate (m³/h)

V is ship's average speed (knots) over the period

D is Draft (m)

B is Breadth (m)

3.6. After the rate of discharge evaluation Segumar Offices will approve it and issue a letter stating the approval.

3.7. The Authorization Letter granting the approval for the Rate of Discharge of Untreated Sewage issued by Segumar Offices will have the same validity of the vessel's ISPPC.

4. Sewage Sludge Management (Temporary Measures)

4.1. Whenever the ship requires to remove the sewage sludge from the tanks, it can be carried out as follows:

- a)** To be discharged at shore reception facilities when available,
- b)** Further treatment on board if appropriate equipment is installed,
- c)** Use of retention tanks or ballast tanks (under certain conditions).

4.2. Since this matter is expected to sustain further discussions at the IMO to revise Annex IV and its guidelines, the above-explained are temporary measures that can be upgraded as final measures once this matter is settled at the IMO.

May 2022 – Sub-Titles 1, 2, 3, 4, definitions and paragraphs 3.7, 4.1, 4.2 added.

November, 2021 – References were updated, subject was amended and entire text was revised.

July, 2008



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Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Circular or any other request should be forward to:

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