



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

Marine Guideline

No. 2-14-1

Apr/2025

**TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF
MERCHANT SHIPS, AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS**

SUBJECT: Ballast Water Management

- Reference:**
- (a) **IMO Resolution [MEPC.151\(55\)](#)**, *Guidelines on designation of areas for Ballast Water Exchange (G14)*, adopted 13 October 2006
 - (b) **IMO Resolution [MEPC.288\(71\)](#)**, *2017 Guidelines for Ballast Water Exchange (G6)*, adopted 7 July 2017
 - (c) **IMO Resolution [MEPC.306\(73\)](#)**, *Amendments to the Guidelines for Ballast Water management and development of Ballast Water Management Plans (G4) (Resolution MEPC.127(53))*, adopted 26 October 2018
 - (d) **IMO Resolution [MEPC.369\(80\)](#)**, *Amendments to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 Amendments to appendix II*, adopted 7 July 2023
 - (e) **IMO Resolution [MEPC.371\(80\)](#)**, *Amendments to the 2017 Guidelines for Ballast Water Exchange (G6) (Resolution MEPC.288(71))*, adopted 7 July 2023
 - (f) **IMO Resolution [MEPC.387\(81\)](#)**, *Interim Guidance on the application of the BWM Convention to ships operating in challenging water quality conditions*, adopted 22 March 2024
 - (g) **IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.32](#)**, *Applicability of the Ballast Water Management Convention to hopper dredgers*, issued 8 August 2011
 - (h) **IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.44](#)**, *Options for ballast water management for offshore support vessels in accordance with the BWM Convention*, issued 29 May 2013
 - (i) **IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.46](#)**, *Application of the BWM Convention to Mobile Offshore Units*, issued 31 May 2013
 - (j) **IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.52/Rev.1](#)**, *Guidance on entry or re-entry of ships into exclusive operation within waters under the jurisdiction of a single Party*, issued 27 July 2017
 - (k) **IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.80/Rev.1](#)**, *International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004; 2024 Guidance on ballast water record-keeping and reporting*, issued 24 October 2024

- (l) **IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.82](#)** *International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments; 2004 Guidance for the temporary storage of treated sewage and/or grey water in ballast water tanks*, issued 2 April 2024
- (m) **RMI Yacht Code 2021 ([MI-103](#))**
- (n) **RMI Marine Notice [2-014-1](#)**, *Ballast Water Management*

PURPOSE

This Marine Guideline (MG) provides the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator's (the "Administrator's") guidance for complying with ballast water management (BWM) requirements and supersedes Rev. Jan/2024.

Section 1.0 has been amended to include:

- guidance for the temporary storage of treated sewage and/or grey water in ballast water tanks (International Maritime Organization (IMO) Circular [BWM.2/Circ.82](#));
- the 2024 guidance on ballast water record-keeping and reporting (IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.80/Rev.1](#)); and
- interim guidance on the application of the *International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments* (BWM Convention) for ships operating in challenging water quality (CWQ) conditions (IMO Resolution [MEPC.387\(81\)](#)).

APPLICABILITY

This MG is for all RMI-flagged vessels that carry ballast water.

GUIDANCE

1.0 BWM Convention

1.1 Ballast Water Exchange (BWE)

- 1.1.1 IMO Resolution [MEPC.288\(71\)](#) provides general guidance on the development of ship-specific procedures for conducting BWE. Its latest amendment (IMO Resolution [MEPC.371\(80\)](#)) replaces the ballast water reporting form (BWRF) with the one provided in IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.80/Rev.1](#), Appendix 2.
- 1.1.2 A port State may establish designated areas for BWE following the *Guidelines on Designation of Areas for Ballast Water Exchange* (G14), adopted by IMO Resolution [MEPC.151\(55\)](#). Ships should comply with the terms of use of those areas provided by the port State.

- 1.2 Ballast Water Record Book (BWRB) and Ballast Water Record-Keeping and Reporting
- 1.2.1 IMO Resolution [MEPC.369\(80\)](#) amends Appendix II to the BWM Convention (the form of the BWRB). These amendments entered into force on 1 February 2025.
- 1.2.2 IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.80/Rev.1](#), *2024 Guidance on ballast water record-keeping and reporting*. This guidance covers:
- .1 **BWRB (Section 2)**: This part explains how ballast water operations should be recorded by making mandatory entries in Appendix II to the BWM Convention. This part is intended for ship's crew.
 - .2 **BWRF (Section 3)**: This part contains an example BWRF together with instructions for completing it. A BWRF may be submitted prior to entry into a port State that requires specific information regarding the management of ballast water on ships bound for its ports, offshore terminals, or anchorage areas. This guidance is intended for ship's crew and port States and may be applied as soon as possible.
 - .3 **Voluntary Tank-by-Tank Log (Section 4)**: This part explains how to maintain voluntary tank-by-tank records of ballast water operations that may facilitate the completion of a BWRF by allowing the crew to efficiently track the contents of each tank and hold that carries ballast water. Maintaining these voluntary records may also assist the ship in documenting and demonstrating that the requirements of the BWM Convention have been met. This part is intended for ship's crew and may be applied as soon as possible.
- 1.3 BWM Guidelines and Development of Ballast Water Management Plans (BWMPs)
- 1.3.1 IMO Resolution [MEPC.127\(53\)](#), *Guidelines for Ballast Water Management and Development of Ballast Water Management Plans (G4)*, as amended, includes guidance on the procedures for the development of BWMPs, as required by regulation B-1. It also contains a standard format for the BWMP in the Appendix.
- 1.3.2 Amendments to the G4 Guidelines through IMO Resolution [MEPC.306\(73\)](#) add in part B, noting that the BWMP may include contingency measures. The Administrator accepts BWE in lieu of using the Ballast Water Management System (BWMS) when this method is included as a contingency measure in the ship's approved BWMP. Concurrence from the coastal State must be obtained before this option is used.

- 1.3.3 The temporary storage of treated sewage (TS) or grey water (GW) in ballast water tanks is not prohibited under the BWM Convention and regulations for the prevention of pollution by sewage from ships (*International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships*, Annex IV).
- .1 In accordance with IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.82](#) the Administrator accepts the transfer TS and/or GW in ballast water tanks as an option in specific ports and areas which restrict the discharge of TS/GW and where the ship does not have dedicated tanks with adequate storage capacity for TS/GW.
 - .2 The BWMP should include as an addendum a ship-specific change-over procedure, refer to IMO Circular BWM.2/Circ.82, *Guidance for the temporary storage of treated sewage and/or grey water in ballast water tanks*. Re-approval of the BWMP following such an amendment is not required.
- 1.3.4 If a BWMS becomes temporarily inoperable due to CWQ conditions¹ in certain ports, then the ship should treat as much ballast water as practicable and should only consider the bypass as the last resort.
- .1 The approved BWMP should include Interim Guidance provided in IMO Resolution [MEPC.387\(81\)](#) for:
 - a. pre-planning;
 - b. by-pass procedures;
 - c. decontamination to minimize the risk of non-compliance with the D-2 standard at subsequent discharges after recovering from by-pass; and
 - d. communication and record-keeping.
 - .2 Any procedures developed may be added either as an addendum in the non-mandatory section, or as part of the plan. In the latter case, the revised BWMP should be re-approved.
 - .3 Entries should be made in the BWRB when the BWMS cannot be operated due to CWQ during exchange and flushing, considering the guidance provided by IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.80/Rev.1](#) and IMO Resolution [MEPC.387\(81\)](#).

¹ Temperature and salinity are not parameters that define CWQ.

1.3.5 Amendments to the G4 Guidelines through IMO Resolution [MEPC.370\(80\)](#) add in Part A, a reference to the 2024 *Guidance on ballast water record-keeping and reporting* (IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.80/Rev.1](#)).

- .1 This guidance should be considered whenever a record of each ballast water operation is to be kept in accordance with regulation B-2 of the BWM Convention.
- .2 They further add a reference to the BWRF and to the example form for maintaining voluntary tank-by-tank records, as set out in IMO Circular BWM.2/Circ.80/Rev.1.

1.4 Offshore Guidance

1.4.1 IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.32](#), *Applicability of the Ballast Water Management Convention to Hopper Dredgers*. The rationale in this circular for hopper dredgers can also be applied to self-elevating units. Where the spudcan is an open structure (not sealed) such as on a jackup rig and it allows water to flow through its grating, that is not considered ballast water.

1.4.2 IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.44](#), *Options for Ballast Water Management for Offshore Support Vessels in accordance with the BWM Convention*.

1.4.3 IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.46](#), *Application of the BWM Convention to Mobile Offshore Units*.

1.4.4 IMO Circular [BWM.2/Circ.52/Rev.1](#), *Guidance on entry or re-entry of ships into exclusive operation within waters under the jurisdiction of a single Party*.

1.5 Yacht Guidance

IMO Resolution [MEPC.123\(53\)](#), *Guidelines for Ballast Water Management Equivalent Compliance (G3)*. See also RMI Yacht Code 2021 ([MI-103](#)) for the application of the BWM Convention requirements to yachts.

2.0 Coastal States

2.1 General

2.1.1 Some coastal States impose different or additional ballast water requirements to those of the BWM Convention. RMI Marine Notice [2-014-1](#) requires all RMI-flagged vessels entering the jurisdiction of these States to comply with their requirements, including any additional regional or local mandates.

- 2.1.2 A coastal or port State authority may request or require specific ballast water procedures or treatment options be undertaken. If the required action cannot be taken due to weather, sea conditions, or operational impracticability, the Master should report this fact to the coastal State authority as soon as possible. Where appropriate, this reporting should occur before entering that coastal State's waters.

2.2 United States (US) Ballast Water Requirements

- 2.2.1 The US has not ratified the BWM Convention but has in place a strict regime that is not completely aligned with international requirements.
- 2.2.2 All RMI-flagged vessels trading into the US are required to comply with that port State's current requirements.
- 2.2.3 The United States Coast Guard BWM Program can be found at: <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/OES>.