



Minnesota  
Pollution  
Control  
Agency

# Ballast Water Discharge General Permit: FAQs for Vessel Owners and Operators

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**T**he Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) issued a Ballast Water Discharge General Permit (Permit) on September 24, 2008. This information sheet answers most frequently asked questions (FAQs) for vessel owners and operators about applying for, and complying with, the Permit.

## **Who needs to apply for coverage under the Ballast Water Discharge General Permit?**

Owners and operators of vessels meeting the applicability criteria (at least 50 meters in length with a ballast water capacity of at least eight cubic meters) wishing to transit through the Minnesota waters of Lake Superior or discharge ballast water into those same waters must apply for coverage. See the Permit for those few vessel types where permit coverage is not required.

## **When will application forms be available?**

Application forms are available on the MPCA's vessel discharge Web page. Note that filling out the Notice of Intent for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) commercial vessel discharge permit does **not** satisfy the MPCA's requirement for application submittal.

## **When will I need to submit an application for coverage?**

The MPCA recognizes that vessel owners and operators need a reasonable period of time to submit their applications and ballast water/sediment management plans following Permit issuance. Vessels that routinely transit Minnesota waters should submit a permit application as soon as possible but no later than December 22, 2008. After December 22, 2008, vessels that infrequently transit Minnesota waters should submit a permit application no later than 30 days **before** the anticipated arrival date to Minnesota waters.

## **How long until I am authorized (covered) under the Permit?**

A vessel is covered under the Permit once a written Notice of Coverage has been received from the MPCA. The MPCA staff intends to issue the Notices of Coverage within 30 to 60 days after receiving a complete and approvable application.

## **What are the fees associated with the Permit?**

The application fee is \$1240. There is also an annual fee of \$345, which is due in March each year for coverage under the Permit during the previous calendar year. Because this is a new Permit and only available late in calendar year 2008, no annual permit fee will be billed to applicants that receive permit coverage in 2008. The permit and annual fees are currently being reviewed and may be subject to change.

## Is separate action needed to comply with the ballast water legislation enacted by the Minnesota Legislature in May 2008?

No. The legislation, which became effective July 1, 2008, specifies requirements related to ballast water management and ballast water record books. By obtaining and complying with the Permit, vessel owners and operators meet the requirements of the legislation. The MPCA is requesting that vessel owners and operators submit ballast water and sediment management plans for approval as part of the general permit application package.

## When will ballast water treatment systems be required?

This depends on when the vessel was constructed. For vessels built prior to January 1, 2012, ballast water treatment systems shall be installed and operational by January 1, 2016. For vessels constructed after January 1, 2012, ballast water treatment systems shall be installed and operational prior to commencement of operation in Minnesota state waters of Lake Superior. Ballast water treatment systems shall be designed to meet the Permit's discharge standards (IMO Regulation D-2).

## What specific actions do I need to take to comply with the Permit? By when?

Vessel owners and operators need to comply with the terms and conditions of the Permit, some of which are highlighted in the table below.

## Where are Ballast Water Reports available?

The MPCA requires submittal of the same Ballast Water (BW) Report as does the U.S. Coast Guard

(USCG). The BW Report is available at <http://invasions.si.edu/nbic/submit.html>. (For non-Canadian foreign-flagged vessels entering the Great Lakes from outside the Exclusive Economic Zone, other reporting requirements may apply.)

## When and where are Ballast Water Reports to be submitted?

Upon receiving a Notice of Coverage, vessel operators are required to submit BW Reports at least 24 hours prior to vessel arrival in a Minnesota port. For voyages shorter than 24 hours, a BW Report must be submitted before departure. Prior to receiving a Notice of Coverage, the MPCA requests that vessel operators submit BW Reports as soon as possible to allow testing of the MPCA's system to receive these reports.

Like the USCG, the MPCA does not require submittal of BW Reports when moving from one dock to another dock within the same port. Unlike the USCG, the MPCA does require submittal of BW Reports to MPCA when moving from one Minnesota port to another Minnesota port. Vessels that transit Minnesota waters on their way to the Port of Superior, Wisconsin, are not required to submit a BW Report prior to arrival in Superior; however, a Permit is required as transit through Minnesota waters is necessary to enter the Port of Superior.

BW Reports may be submitted by e-mail to [ballastwater@pca.state.mn.us](mailto:ballastwater@pca.state.mn.us) (preferably), by fax to 218-723-4727 or by postal service to: MPCA, Ballast Water Report, 525 South Lake Avenue, Suite 400, Duluth, Minnesota 55802.

### Discharge standards, monitoring and submittal compliance timelines

Discharge Standards	Best Management Practices (Vessel-specific plan addressing ballast water and sediment management submitted with permit application for approval by MPCA)	Compliance as soon as possible but no later than the date that the Notice of Coverage is received.
	IMO Regulation D-2 Performance Standards (Biological concentration-based effluent limits)	Compliance required by 1-1-12 for new vessels and no later than 1-1-16 for existing vessels (those constructed prior to 1-1-12)
	Additional Effluent Limits Based on Treatment Technology (such as monitoring for temperature if treatment technology uses heat)	Compliance required upon installation of treatment technology
Monitoring and Submittals	Submit Ballast Water Treatment Technology Plan	180 days prior to implementation of treatment technology
	Submit Ballast Water Reports (or Pre-entry Information from Foreign Flagged Vessels form)	Compliance as soon as possible, but no later than the date that the Notice of Coverage is received Form due 24 hours before arrival in Minnesota Port
	Submit Discharge Monitoring Report	Annually following implementation of treatment technology

**For more information:** Contact the MPCA Duluth Office at 218-723-4660; or at 651-296-6300 or toll free at 800-657-3864. Ask for the Vessel Discharge Program. Visit the MPCA's vessel discharge Web page at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/programs/ballastwater.html>.