

Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships and MARPOL 73/78

Agencies: United States Coast Guard

Citation: See summary below

Enacted as: See summary below

Summary:

In 1973, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted the [International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution by Ships](#) and subsequently modified it by Protocol in 1978. The Convention is widely known as MARPOL 73/78. Its objective is to limit ship-borne pollution by restricting operational pollution and reducing the possibility of accidental pollution. MARPOL specifies standards for stowing, handling, shipping, and transferring pollutant cargoes, as well as standards for discharge of ship-generated operational wastes. Acceptance of the convention by national government obliges them to make the requirements part of domestic law.

MARPOL 73/78 consists of six separate Annexes – each sets out regulations covering the various sources of ship-generated pollution. Annexes I and II are mandatory for all signatory nations to MARPOL while Annexes III, IV, V and VI are optional.

Currently, the United States is signatory to Annexes I, II, III, V and VI. Annexes I, II, V and VI have been incorporated into U.S. law by the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships (APPS) and implemented within [33 U.S.C. § 1901](#) and [33 C.F.R. Part 151](#). The AAPS was subsequently amended by the Marine Plastic Pollution Research and Control Act (1987) and the Marine Pollution Prevention Act (2008). The United States incorporates Annex III by the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act (HMTA) implemented within [46 U.S.C. § 2101](#) and [49 C.F.R. Parts 171 -174 and 176](#). Although the United States has not ratified Annex IV, it has equivalent regulations for the treatment and discharge standards of shipboard sewage – the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (FWPCA), as amended by the Clean Water Act and implemented by [33 U.S.C. § 1251](#) and [33 C.F.R. Part 159](#).

The table below indicates each Annex by pollution source, its title, U.S. signatory status and implementing legislation, law and/or regulations.

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution by Ships (MARPOL 73/78)				
Annex	Pollution Source	Title	U.S. Signatory?	Implementing Legislation/ Regulations/ Guidance
I	Oil	Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Oil	Yes	Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships of 1980 (APPS) 33 U.S.C. § 1901 – 1912 33 C.F.R. Parts 151, 155, 156, 157
II	Noxious Liquid Substances (NLS)	Regulations for the Control of Pollution by NLS in bulk	Yes	APPS 33 U.S.C. § 1901 – 1912 33 C.F.R. Part 151

III	Packaged Substances	Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Harmful Substances in Packaged Form	Yes	Hazardous Materials Transportation Act of 1974 (HMTA) 49 U.S.C. § 1801 – 1813 46 C.F.R. Part 148 49 C.F.R. Parts 171-174, 176
IV	Sewage	Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships	No	Federal Water Pollution Control Act (FWPCA), as amended by the Clean Water Act (CWA) 33 U.S.C. § 1251 33 C.F.R. Part 159
V	Garbage	Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships	Yes	APPS 33 U.S.C. § 1901 – 1912 33 C.F.R. Part 151
VI	Air	Regulations for the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships	Yes	APPS 33 U.S.C. § 1901 – 1912 40 C.F.R. Part 94 (EPA Engine Emissions)

Source: <https://homeport.uscg.mil/mycg/portal/ep/programView.do?channelId=-18346&programId=243762&programPage=%2Fep%2Fprogram%2Feditorial.jsp> (last visited, March 28, 2014).

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