



VESSEL DUMPING

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What is dumping?

Within the context of commercial shipping in Canada today, dumping lacks a comprehensive definition. WWF-Canada proposes a definition of dumping that includes the release of blackwater (sewage), grey water (wastewater that has not come into contact with sewage), oil, ballast water (the exchange of water used to stabilize ships, which may contain marine organisms), scrubber liquid effluent (acidic and toxic discharge from scrubbed pollutants from a ship's air emissions), and solid waste into the water as a result of shipping activity.

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What are the impacts of dumping?

- **Dumping of harmful substances** may spread harmful bacteria and disease, which could impact people living in coastal communities.
- **Increases in nutrients caused by dumping** could also lead to algal blooms and dead zones, where low oxygen levels kill most, or all, marine life.
- **Dumping of oil** has the potential to cause behavioural disturbances and malformations in marine animals.
- **Discharging ballast water** can introduce non-native species, bacteria and parasites, compromising native species and ecosystems.

What activities are covered by Canada's regulations?

International and national laws govern the release of harmful substances from commercial shipping in Canadian waters.

- Generally, untreated sewage cannot be discharged within 12 nautical miles of the coast for large ships, or within three miles of the shore for smaller vessels.
- In Canada, grey water and scrubber liquid effluent regulations differ depending on where vessels are operating. Regulations for grey water release are more stringent for ships in Canadian waters below 60 degrees latitude than they are for waters above 60 degrees latitude.
- Ballast water exchange in Canadian waters is allowed in specifically designated areas.

What needs to be done?

- A comprehensive definition of dumping should be adopted by the federal government that includes a list of all pollutants that may be released as a result of shipping activity.
- Grey water discharge should be regulated similarly to sewage discharge.
- The discharge of scrubber liquid effluent should be banned in Canadian waters.
- Dumping in marine protected areas should incorporate the various pollution streams from a ship.

Why address this now?

As shipping activity in many regions of Canada increases, the amount of harmful substances dumped in Canadian waters will also likely increase. Coastal communities and marine ecosystems could be harmed if dumping is not comprehensively defined so that clear and effective regulations can be developed and enforced.