



## COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

### *International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004*

**SUBJECT CATEGORY:**

Marine / Oceans

**TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:**

Multilateral

**FORM:**

Legally binding treaty

**STATUS:**

- Opened for adoption on February 13, 2004
- Canada acceded to the convention in 2010 and it entered into force on September 8, 2017.
- 89 countries.

**LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:**

**Lead:** Transport Canada

**Partners:** Department of Fisheries and Oceans

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:****Web Links:**

- [International Maritime Organization](#)
- [Transport Canada - Managing ballast water](#)

**Contacts:**

[Transport Canada Inquiry Centre](#)

**COMPENDIUM EDITION:**

February 2022

**PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY**

The Government of Canada supports effective ballast water management standards to reduce the risk of introducing invasive aquatic species. Canada established a robust regulatory regime in 2006. In 2010, Canada acceded to the 2004 international ballast water Convention, which requires ships to manage their ballast water. In June 2021, Canada finalised the *Ballast Water Regulations*, which give effect to the IMO ballast water Convention in Canada. These regulations also apply to Canada's domestic fleet to further increase environmental protection.

Canada and the U.S. (which is not a Party to the Convention) have a long history of compatible ballast water requirements, which has helped sustain the Great Lakes marine industry. Canada and the U.S. continue to work closely bilaterally and at the International Maritime Organization towards compatible, practicable and environmentally protective ballast water requirements for the Great Lakes that reflect economic fairness.

**OBJECTIVE, KEY ELEMENTS AND EXPECTED RESULTS**

The objective of this Convention is to prevent, minimize and ultimately eliminate the risks to the environment, human health, property and resources arising from the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens through the control and management of ships' ballast water and sediments, as well as to avoid unwanted side-effects from that control and to encourage developments in related knowledge and technology.

Key elements of the Convention include requiring all ships to: implement a Ballast Water Management Plan; secure a Ballast Water Management Certificate; maintain a Ballast Water Record Book; and meet ballast water management standards. Parties to the Convention may establish additional measures that are subject to criteria set out in the Convention and International Maritime Organization (IMO) guidelines.

The Convention's ballast water management standards will be phased in leading up to 2024, or 2030 in the case of older vessels that operate in Canada and the U.S. waters of the Great Lakes. Eventually most ships will

need to install an on-board ballast water treatment system. In the meantime, ships must exchange their ballast water in mid-ocean. Some smaller vessels (including those less than 50 m long that remain in Canada) can follow equivalent rules better suited to their operations and size.

The Convention is expected to reduce the introduction and spread of new aquatic species, including bacteria and other microbes, micro algae and various aquatic plant and animal species in Canada and globally.

## **CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT**

Canada played a key role in the development of the Convention and continues to play an active role in international discussion on the Convention and its implementation at the IMO.

Canada will enforce the Convention's standards, timelines and other requirements for vessels flying Canada's flag. Canada will also inspect and enforce the Convention's requirements on other ships operating in waters under Canadian jurisdiction.

## **RESULTS / PROGRESS**

### ***Activities***

Canada is now applying the Convention and the 2021 *Ballast Water Regulations* under the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*.

Based upon the most recent science advice from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the 2021 *Regulations* also apply to ships that remain within Canada and the high seas, to address the environmental risks those

ships pose, and prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species within Canada.

Canada will remain active in the international discourse on the implementation of the Convention at the IMO, with the goal of ensuring that the Convention remains both practicable and environmentally protective.

Canada continues to work closely with the United States towards binational compatibility on the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Seaway system. Canada also continues to co-operate on the joint oversight of ballast water management and invasive species with the United States through the *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA)*.

### ***Reports***

Canadian activities at the IMO are documented in the proceedings of IMO Marine Environmental Protection Committee Meetings and published on the IMO web site. Transport Canada reports on ballast water management through its Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy. Under the GLWQA, Canada and the U.S. develop the "Progress Report of the Parties", which documents the binational and domestic activities and accomplishments of Canada and the United States in implementing the GLWQA.