

Merchant Marine Notice MMN-17-003r3

Title:	Survey and Certification for the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention)	
To:	DEPUTY REGISTRARS, SHIP OWNERS/ISM OPERATORS/RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS/SHIPPING AGENTS/FLAG STATE INSPECTORS	
Issuance Date:	16 September 2025	
MSN Superseded:	MMN-17-003r2	Revision No.: 3

1. REFERENCE

- International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention).
- Resolution MEPC.287 (71) Implementation of the BWM Convention.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention), entered into force on 8 September 2017 and aims to prevent the spread of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens through the discharge of ballast water. Since its entry into force, the Convention has undergone several amendments adopted by the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) to enhance its implementation and technical clarity. These include updates to the implementation schedule, survey and certification requirements, and ballast water management standards.

2.2 The International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) issues this circular to provide updated guidance to Shipowners, ISM Operators, Deputy Registrars, and Recognized Organizations on the application of the BWM Convention to Belize-flagged vessels. It outlines the current regulatory framework, certification procedures, and compliance expectations in accordance with the latest IMO resolutions and IMMARBE policies.

3. PURPOSE

3.1 The purpose of this circular is to inform Shipowners, ISM Operators, Deputy Registrars, and Recognized Organizations of the current requirements and procedures for compliance with the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention), as applicable to vessels registered under the Belize flag. It outlines IMMARBE's position on the implementation of the Convention, including certification, survey requirements, exemptions, and the acceptance of Ballast Water Management Systems (BWMS), in accordance with the latest amendments and guidance issued by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

3.2 This circular also serves to ensure uniform application of the Convention across



the Belize fleet and to support the protection of the marine environment through effective ballast water management practices.

4. APPLICATION

4.1 The International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediment, 2004 (BWM Convention) applies to all vessels of any type whatsoever operating in the aquatic environment and includes submersibles, floating crafts, floating platforms, FSUs and FPSOs in accordance with the definition of "Ship" in the Article 1.12 of this Convention, except for:

- 4.1.1 Ships not designed or constructed to carry Ballast Water.
- 4.1.2 Ships that only operate in Belize National Waters.
- 4.1.3 Ships that only operate in waters under the jurisdiction of another Party and on the high seas, subject to the authorization of the Party for such exclusion.
- 4.1.4 Warship, naval auxiliary or other ship owned or operated by a State and used, for the time being, only on government non-commercial services;
- 4.1.5 Ships with permanent Ballast Water in sealed tanks on ships, that is not subject to discharge.

5. ATTESTATION LETTERS

- 5.1 Vessels falling under 4.1.1 to 4.1.5 criteria shall apply for an "Attestation Letter" from the Administration, which confirms that the convention does not apply to the vessel.
- 5.2 Attestation Letters must be kept on board and presented to local authorities upon request.
- 5.3 Application for Attestation Letters is done through the vessel's Deputy Registrar in accordance with the procedures stipulated in [MMN-19-002](#) in its latest version.

6. SURVEY AND CERTIFICATION

- 6.1 All Ships of 400 gross tonnage and above to which this Convention applies, excluding floating platforms, FSUs and FPSOs, shall be issued with an International Ballast Water Management Certificate (IBWMC), subject to surveys specified below:
 - 6.1.1 An initial survey before the ship is put in service or before the IBWMC is issued for the first time.
 - 6.1.2 A renewal survey at intervals not exceeding five years.
 - 6.1.3 An intermediate survey within three months before or after the second anniversary date or within three months before or after the third anniversary date of the IBWMC.
 - 6.1.4 An annual survey within three months before or after each anniversary date.
 - 6.1.5 An additional survey, either general or partial, according to the circumstances.
- 6.2 **The Belize Government has not yet ratified the BWM Convention;** therefore, all vessels registered with IMMARBE to which this Convention applies shall be issued with an **International Ballast Water Management Statement of Compliance**.
- 6.3 All vessels registered with IMMARBE falling under the applicability of this convention is required to carry on board the following:



- 6.3.1 Ballast Water Management Plan (BWMP) approved by the Recognized Organization on behalf of IMMARBE in accordance with Regulation B-1 of the BWM Convention and taking into account Guidelines developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
- 6.3.2 These include but is not limited to MEPC 127 (53) Guidelines for ballast water management and development of ballast water management plans, as amended by Resolution MEPC.307 (73), Amendments to the Guidelines for ballast water management and development of ballast water management plans and Resolution MEPC.370 (80) Amendments to the Guidelines for ballast water management and development of ballast water management plans.
- 6.3.3 Guidance Documents related to the implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' ballast water and sediments, 2004 must also be considered in formulating or updating the BWMP as may be applicable (see Annex 1).
- 6.3.4 Ballast Water Record Book (BWRB) in accordance with Regulation B-2 of the BWM Convention, that may be an electronic record book, or that may be integrated into another record book system.
- 6.3.5 International Ballast Water Management Statement of Compliance valid for five years and subject to annual, intermediate and renewal surveys in accordance with regulation E-1 of the BWM Convention.

7. REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1 All vessels to which this Convention applies must be aware of the following requirements:
- 7.2 Ships of 400 gross tonnage and above to which this Convention applies, excluding floating platforms, FSUs and FPSOs, shall be subject to surveys and certified before the ship is put into service or before the vessel is permitted to sail under the Belize flag.
- 7.3 Taking into consideration the date of construction, vessels shall be fitted with an approved Ballast Water Management System (BWMS) and comply with regulation D-2 (Ballast Water Performance Standard) as follows:
- 7.4 All ships of 400 gross tons to which the convention applies must conform with D-2 Standard.
- 7.5 After survey and verification of compliance, the RO shall submit the Statement of Compliance to IMMARBE's Technical Department at technicalservices@immarbe.com. This submission shall be done in accordance with our [MMN-23-003](#) in its latest version concerning Reporting on Statutory Surveys and Certification Status to IMMARBE.

8. BALLAST WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (BWMS)

- 8.1 IMMARBE will accept Ballast Water Management System Type approvals issued by other Administrations or by a member of the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS).
- 8.2 The verification that type approval is in compliance with the Code for Approval of Ballast Water Management System (to be adopted by MEPC 72) is delegated to the



Recognized Organization in charge of the issuance of the International Ballast Water Management Statement of Compliance on behalf of this Administration.

9. FEES

- 9.1 The applicable fees for issuance of statutory certificates will be in accordance with the [MMN-24-005](#) (in its latest revision) concerning the Administrative Fee for Statutory Certificates issued and endorsed on behalf of IMMARBE.

10. ACTIONS REQUESTED

- 10.1 This Administration would like to encourage all Shipowners, Operators, Deputy Registrar and Recognized Organizations to take note of the contents of this Notice and to ensure its provisions are enforced on board vessels registered at IMMARBE as deemed necessary.

11. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

- 11.1 Failure to adhere to the requirements outlined in this Notice may result in disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by IMMARBE. This may include, but is not limited to:
- Suspension or revocation of the vessel's certification.
 - Imposition of fines or penalties.
 - Restrictions on the vessel's operations or trading activities.
 - Other legal actions as specified under the Belize Merchant Ships (Registration) Act and Statutory Instrument 56 of 1999.

It is imperative that all parties adhere fully to the procedures and requirements to ensure proper certification and avoid any regulatory issues.

IMMARBE anticipates your cooperation and assistance.

This notice was issued in Belize City, Belize 16 September 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eduardo Simon".

Eng. Eduardo Simon
Director of Technical & Seafarer
Services
IMMARBE

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Gersok".

For: Mr. Paul Gersok
Managing Director
IMMARBE

2025.09.16
12:45:19 -06'00'

Any queries related to this Notice shall be directed to technicalservices@immarbe.com

ANNEX I

GUIDELINES AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF SHIPS' BALLAST WATER AND SEDIMENTS, 2004

Table 1: Supplemental mandatory instruments

Resolution	Title	Status
MEPC.300(72)*	Code for Approval of Ballast Water Management Systems (BWMS Code)	In effect since 13 October 2019

Table 2: List of Guidelines for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention

Resolution	Title	Status
MEPC.152(55)	Guidelines for sediment reception facilities (G1)	
MEPC.173(58)	Guidelines for ballast water sampling (G2)	
MEPC.123(53)	Guidelines for ballast water management equivalent compliance (G3)	
MEPC.127(53)	Guidelines for ballast water management and development of ballast water management plans (G4)	Amended by MEPC.306(73) and MEPC.370(80)
MEPC.153(55)	Guidelines for ballast water reception facilities (G5)	
MEPC.288(71)	2017 Guidelines for ballast water exchange (G6)	Revokes MEPC.124(53) Amended by MEPC.371(80)
MEPC.289(71)	2017 Guidelines for risk assessment under regulation A-4 of the BWM Convention (G7)	Supersedes MEPC.162(56)
MEPC.169(57)	Procedure for approval of ballast water management systems that make use of active substances (G9)	Revokes MEPC.126(53)
MEPC.140(54)	Guidelines for approval and oversight of prototype ballast water treatment technology programmes (G10)	
MEPC.149(55)	Guidelines for ballast water exchange design and construction standards (G11)	
MEPC.209(63)	2012 Guidelines on design and construction to facilitate sediment control on ships (G12)	Revokes MEPC.150(55)
MEPC.161(56)	Guidelines for additional measures regarding ballast water management including emergency situations (G13)	
MEPC.151(55)	Guidelines on designation of areas for ballast water exchange (G14)	

* With the introduction of the BWMS Code the various versions of the *Guidelines for approval of ballast water management systems* (G8) became obsolete and are therefore not included in Table 2.

Table 3: Indicative list of other resolutions and guidelines related to the implementation of the BWM Convention

Resolution	Title	Status
MEPC.387(81)	Interim guidance on the application of the BWM Convention to ships operating in challenging water quality conditions	
MEPC.372(80)	Guidelines for the use of electronic record books under the BWM Convention	
MEPC.290(71)	The experience-building phase associated with the BWM Convention	
MEPC.252(67)	Guidelines for port State control under the BWM Convention	
MEPC.206(62)	Procedure for approving other methods of ballast water management in accordance with regulation B-3.7 of the BWM Convention	

Table 4: Indicative list of circulars related to the implementation of the BWM Convention

Circular	Title	Status
BWM.2/Circ.82	Guidance for the temporary storage of treated sewage and/or grey water in ballast water tanks	
BWM.2/Circ.80/Rev.1	2024 Guidance on ballast water record-keeping and reporting	Revokes BWM.2/Circ.80
BWM.2/Circ.79	Convention Review Plan for the experience-building phase associated with the BWM Convention	
BWM.2/Circ.78	Protocol for the verification of ballast water compliance monitoring devices	
BWM.2/Circ.70/Rev.1	2020 Guidance for the commissioning testing of ballast water management systems	Revokes BWM.2/Circ.70
BWM.2/Circ.69	Guidance on System Design Limitations of ballast water management systems and their monitoring	
BWM.2/Circ.66, as revised	Unified interpretations to the BWM Convention	
BWM.2/Circ.63	Application of the Convention to ships operating in sea areas where ballast water exchange in accordance with regulations B-4.1 and D-1 is not possible	
BWM.2/Circ.62	Guidance on contingency measures under the BWM Convention	
BWM.2/Circ.61/Rev.1	2022 Guidance on methodologies that may be used for enumerating viable organisms for type approval of ballast water management systems	Revokes BWM.2/Circ.61
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	Supersedes BWM.2/Circ.52
BWM.2/Circ.46	Application of the BWM Convention to Mobile Offshore Units	
BWM.2/Circ.45	Clarification of "major conversion" as defined in regulation A-1.5 of the BWM Convention	
BWM.2/Circ.44	Options for ballast water management for Offshore Support Vessels in accordance with the BWM Convention	

Table 4 (continued)

Circular	Title	Status
BWM.2/Circ.43/ Rev.2	2024 Guidance for Administrations on the type approval process for ballast water management systems	Revokes BWM.2/Circ.28, BWM.2/Circ.43 and BWM.2/Circ.43/Rev.1
BWM.2/Circ.42/ Rev.2	2020 Guidance on ballast water sampling and analysis for trial use in accordance with the BWM Convention and Guidelines (G2)	Revokes BWM.2/Circ.42/Rev.1
BWM.2/Circ.37	Information that should be made available in proposals for approval of ballast water management systems in accordance with the Procedure for approval of ballast water management systems that make use of Active Substances (G9)	
BWM.2/Circ.34, as revised	List of ballast water management systems that make use of Active Substances which received Basic and Final Approval	Revised annually
BWM.2/Circ.33/ Rev.1	Guidance on scaling of ballast water management systems	Supersedes BWM.2/Circ.33
BWM.2/Circ.32	Applicability of the Ballast Water Management Convention to hopper dredgers	
BWM.2/Circ.27	Framework for determining when a Basic Approval granted to one ballast water management system may be applied to another system that uses the same Active Substance or Preparation	
BWM.2/Circ.21	Engineering Questionnaire on ballast water management systems	
BWM.2/Circ.20	Guidance to ensure safe handling and storage of chemicals and preparations used to treat ballast water and the development of safety procedures for risks to the ship and crew resulting from the treatment process	
BWM.2/Circ.17	Guidance document on arrangements for responding to emergency situations involving ballast water operations	
BWM.2/Circ.13, as revised*	Methodology for information gathering and conduct of work of the GESAMP-BWWG	

Note: All tables updated in May 2025. The lists in Tables 3 and 4 are not exhaustive. For a full list of resolutions and BWM circulars, please consult the [Index of IMO Resolutions](#) and the publicly available [Circulars](#) at IMODOCS.

* For the applicability of the various revisions, see paragraph 4.1.1 of the report of GESAMP-BWWG 46 (GESAMP-BWWG 46/6, attached to document MEPC 83/4/3), and paragraphs 6 and 7 of BWM.2/Circ.13/Rev.5.