

MEPC.1/Circ.778/Rev.3
2 July 2018

LIST OF SPECIAL AREAS, EMISSION CONTROL AREAS AND PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE SEA AREAS

Special Areas and Emission Control Areas (ECAs) under MARPOL

1 Special Areas are defined under MARPOL Annexes I, IV and V as sea areas where, for recognized technical reasons in relation to their oceanographical and ecological conditions and to the particular character of their sea traffic, the adoption of special mandatory methods for the prevention of pollution of the sea from ships by oil, sewage or garbage, as applicable, is required.

2 Emission Control Areas (ECA) are defined under MARPOL Annex VI as areas where the adoption of special mandatory measures to regulate emissions from ships is required to prevent, reduce and control air pollution from NO_x and/or SO_x and/or particulate matter (PM) and their attendant adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

3 Under MARPOL, Special Areas and ECAs are provided with a higher level of protection than other sea areas. While a number of such areas were designated when the 1973 MARPOL Convention and MARPOL Annex VI were first adopted in 1973 and 1997, respectively, additional Special Areas and ECAs have since been designated through the adoption of amendments to the relevant MARPOL Annexes.

4 A list of designated Special Areas and ECAs under MARPOL is set out in annex 1, also providing information on the adoption date of the respective amendments to relevant MARPOL Annexes, as appropriate; the date of entry into force of such amendments; and the date on which the more stringent measures took effect for Special Areas.

Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas

5 MEPC began its study of the issue of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) in response to resolution 9 of the 1978 International Conference on Tanker Safety and Pollution Prevention concerning the protection of such sea areas. Recognizing the importance of the matter, the Committee consequently defined PSSAs as sea areas needing special protection through action by IMO because of their recognized ecological, socio-economic or scientific attributes which may be vulnerable to damage by international shipping activities.

6 IMO, through MEPC, is the only international body responsible for assessing proposals for and designating PSSAs and adopting associated protective measures (APMs) applicable to international shipping.

7 So far, MEPC has assessed and designated 15 PSSAs, including two extensions to existing PSSAs, in accordance with the *Revised guidelines for the Identification and Designation of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas* (resolution A.982(24), as amended by resolution MEPC.267(68)). The key details of these PSSA are provided in annex 2, which also contains information on the proposing State(s), the corresponding APMs and the date of adoption of the MEPC resolutions designating the PSSAs.

ANNEX 1

LIST OF SPECIAL AREAS AND EMISSION CONTROL AREAS UNDER MARPOL

Special Areas	Amendments adopted to the MARPOL Annex	Entry into force of the amendments	More stringent measures in effect from
MARPOL Annex I: Oil			
Mediterranean Sea ¹	-	-	2 Oct 1983
Baltic Sea ¹	-	-	2 Oct 1983
Black Sea ¹	-	-	2 Oct 1983
Red Sea ¹	-	-	-
Gulfs area ¹	-	-	1 Aug 2008 (MEPC.168(56))
Gulf of Aden ²	1 Dec 1987 (MEPC.29(25))	1 Apr 1989	-
Antarctic area	16 Nov 1990 (MEPC.42(30))	17 Mar 1992	17 Mar 1992
North West European waters	25 Sep 1997 (MEPC.75(40))	1 Feb 1999	1 Aug 1999 (MEPC.77(41))
Oman area of the Arabian Sea ²	15 Oct 2004 (MEPC.117(52))	1 Jan 2007	-
Southern South African waters	13 Oct 2006 (MEPC.154(55))	1 Mar 2008	1 Aug 2008 (MEPC.167(56))
MARPOL Annex IV: Sewage			
Baltic Sea	15 Jul 2011 (MEPC.200(62))	1 Jan 2013	1 Jun 2019 1 Jun 2021 1 Jun 2023 (MEPC.275(69)) ³
MARPOL Annex V: Garbage			
Mediterranean Sea	-	-	1 May 2009 (MEPC.172(57))
Baltic Sea	-	-	1 Oct 1989 (MEPC.31(26))
Black Sea ²	-	-	-
Red Sea ²	-	-	-
Gulfs area	-	-	1 Aug 2008 (MEPC.168(56))
North Sea	17 Oct 1989 (MEPC.36(28))	18 Feb 1991	18 Feb 1991 (MEPC.37(28))
Antarctic area	16 Nov 1990 (MEPC.42(30))	17 Mar 1992	17 Mar 1992
Wider Caribbean region including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea	4 Jul 1991 (MEPC.48(31))	4 Apr 1993	1 May 2011 (MEPC.191(60))

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Emission Control Areas	Amendments adopted to the MARPOL Annex	Entry into force of the amendments	More stringent measures in effect from
MARPOL Annex VI: Air pollution (Emission Control Areas)			
Baltic Sea ⁴ (SO _x)	-	-	19 May 2006
(NO _x)	7 Jul 2017 (MEPC.286(71))	1 Jan 2019	1 Jan 2021 ⁵
North Sea (SO _x)	22 Jul 2005 (MEPC.132(53))	22 Nov 2006	22 Nov 2007
(NO _x)	7 Jul 2017 (MEPC.286(71))	1 Jan 2019	1 Jan 2021 ⁵
North America (SO _x and PM)	26 Mar 2010 (MEPC.190(60))	1 Aug 2011	1 Aug 2012
(NO _x)			1 Jan 2016 ⁶
United States Caribbean Sea (SO _x and PM)	15 Jul 2011 (MEPC.202(62))	1 Jan 2013	1 Jan 2014
(NO _x)			1 Jan 2016 ⁶

¹ The Mediterranean Sea, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Red Sea and the Gulfs area were designated as Special Areas under MARPOL Annexes I and V when the 1973 MARPOL Convention was adopted on 2 November 1973. MARPOL Annexes I and V entered into force on 2 October 1983 and 31 December 1988, respectively.

² The Special Area requirements for these areas have not yet taken effect because of lack of notifications from MARPOL Parties whose coastlines border the relevant Special Areas regarding the existence of adequate reception facilities (MARPOL Annex I, regulation 38.6, and MARPOL Annex V, regulation 8.2).

³ In accordance with resolution MEPC.275(69), the discharge requirements for Special Areas in regulation 11.3 of MARPOL Annex IV for the Baltic Sea Special Area shall take effect:

- .1 on 1 June 2019, for new passenger ships;
- .2 on 1 June 2021, for existing passenger ships other than those specified in .3; and
- .3 on 1 June 2023, for existing passenger ships en route directly to or from a port located outside the special area and to or from a port located east of longitude 28°10' E within the special area that do not make any other port calls within the special area.

⁴ The Baltic Sea was designated as an Emission Control Area for SO_x when MARPOL Annex VI, which entered into force on 19 May 2005, was first adopted on 26 September 1997.

⁵ A ship constructed on or after 1 January 2021 and operating in these emission control areas shall comply with NO_x Tier III standards set forth in regulation 13.5 of MARPOL Annex VI.

⁶ A ship constructed on or after 1 January 2016 and operating in these emission control areas shall comply with NO_x Tier III standards set forth in regulation 13.5 of MARPOL Annex VI.

ANNEX 2

LIST OF PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE SEA AREAS

No.	PSSA	Proposing State(s)	Associated Protective Measures*	MEPC resolution
1	Great Barrier Reef Region	Australia	IMO-recommended Australian system of pilotage; mandatory ship reporting system	16 Nov 1990 (MEPC.44(30))
	Torres Strait extension	Australia, Papua New Guinea	IMO-recommended Australian system of pilotage; two-way route	22 Jul 2005 (MEPC.133(53))
	South West Coral Sea extension	Australia	Area to be avoided; traffic separation systems	May 2015 (MEPC.268(68))
2	Archipelago of Sabana-Camaguey	Cuba	Area to be avoided	25 Sep 1997 (MEPC.74(40))
3	Sea area around Malpelo Island	Colombia	Area to be avoided	8 Mar 2002 (MEPC.97(47))
4	Sea area around the Florida Keys	United States	Areas to be avoided; mandatory no anchoring areas	8 Mar 2002 (MEPC.98(47))
5	Wadden Sea	Netherlands, Denmark, Germany	Mandatory deep water route	11 Oct 2002 (MEPC.101(48))
6	Paracas National Reserve	Peru	Area to be avoided	18 Jul 2003 (MEPC.106(49))
7	Western European Waters	Belgium, France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom	Mandatory ship reporting system	15 Oct 2004 (MEPC.121(52))
8	Canary Islands	Spain	Areas to be avoided; traffic separation systems; recommended routes; mandatory ship reporting system	22 Mar 2004 (MEPC.134(53))
9	Galapagos Archipelago	Ecuador	Area to be avoided; mandatory ship reporting system; recommended tracks	22 Mar 2004 (MEPC.135(53))
10	Baltic Sea Area	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden	Traffic separation schemes; deepwater route; areas to be avoided; mandatory ship reporting system; MARPOL Special Area; MARPOL SO _x ECA	22 Mar 2004 (MEPC.136(53))
11	Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument	United States	Areas to be avoided; recommended/mandatory ship reporting system	4 Apr 2008 (MEPC.171(57))
12	Strait of Bonifacio	France, Italy	Recommendation on navigation	15 Jul 2011 (MEPC.204(62))
13	Saba Bank (Caribbean Island of Saba)	Netherlands	Area to be avoided; mandatory no anchoring area	5 Oct 2012 (MEPC.226(64))
14	Jomard Entrance	Papua New Guinea	Routeing system (4 two-way routes and a precautionary area)	28 Oct 2016 (MEPC.283(70))
15	Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park	Philippines	Area to be avoided	7 Jul 2017 (MEPC.294(71))

* This table only lists those APMs that have been specifically identified as APMs *per se*. There may be other IMO-adopted measures in the designated PSSA. In some cases, national measures may also be relevant.