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Spring 2013

United States Environmental Protection Agency 2013 Vessel General Permit



On March 28, 2013, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued the new 2013 final National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations pertaining to the Vessel General Permit (VGP) effluents. The current Notice of Intent (NOI) permits, which most, if not all of your vessels have onboard, will remain in effect until December 19, 2013. Under the 2013 Final VGP, the new permits will become effective on December 19, 2013 and will remain in effect until 2018.

The VGP NOI permit is applicable to vessels larger than 79 feet (24 meters), which discharge effluents (listed in VGP 1.2.2) into the waters of the United States, extending to the outer reach of the 3 mile Territorial Sea. This includes all navigable waters of the Great Lakes subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

The EPA has confirmed to Compliance Systems, Inc. (CSI) they are working on the new software for the new permit process and they are hoping to have it on the Internet sometime during September 2013; although this timeframe is not concrete. Without disclosing specifics, they are hoping to integrate the existing NOI's into the new software and they are working to make the process more efficient and user friendly.

A few notable changes are:

- Oil discharge monitoring system and electronic valve switching function (as applicable) for new vessels have been added to the annual inspections (VGP 4.1.3). This is applicable to the oily water separator oil content monitor and three way valve.
- Sampling, testing and recordkeeping requirements for the following: bilge water for oil and grease content (VGP 2.2.2.1); ballast water for biological organism monitoring (VGP 2.2.3.5); graywater for analysis for new vessels built after December 19, 2013, navigating in the Great Lakes (VGP 2.2.15.1); exhaust gas scrubber sample analysis for probe accuracy (VGP 2.2.26.2.2); cruise vessel treated graywater discharges (VGP 5.1. & 5.2).
- Calibration requirements for ballast water sensors and oil content monitor .
- Annual report to be completed each calendar year and submitted to the EPA prior to February 28 of the following year. The nine page annual report is located in Appendix H (page 181) of the Final 2013 VGP.

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ISPS Tip

When entries are made in the Visitors' Log Book, it is recommended that the gangway watchstander make the entries rather than handing the pen over to the visitor and having him make his own entry. This will ensure that entries are complete, correct, and legible.

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IMPORTANT NUMBERS

National Response Center:
(202) 267-2675

National Vessel Movement Center:
(304) 264-2502

MTSA / ISPS Help Desk:
(877) 687-2243

CSI 24 Hour Emergency and other Inquiries:
(912) 233-8181

Q.I. Reminder:

Please provide CSI with your fleet’s weekly position reports. These position reports help us properly track your vessels’ scheduled calls to U.S. ports and gives us sufficient time to contact the USCG and other agencies to determine if any inspections are scheduled during your vessel’s call. For tank vessels, please remember that the USCG typically requires seven days advanced notice to schedule a Certificate of Compliance annual or renewal exam. As your Qualified Individual, it is important that CSI be kept informed of your vessels’ U.S. port calls.

United States Environmental Protection Agency 2013 Vessel General Permit—cont’d

- New ballast water treatment system Best Available Technology Economically Achievable compliance dates in accordance with the following schedule:

	Vessel’s Ballast Water Capacity	Date Constructed	Vessel’s Compliance Date
New vessels		After December 1, 2013	On delivery
Existing vessels	Less than 1500 m ³	Before December 1, 2013	First scheduled drydocking after January 1, 2016
	1500-5000 m ³	Before December 1, 2013	First scheduled drydocking after January 1, 2014
	Greater than 5000 m ³	Before December 1, 2013	First scheduled drydocking after January 1, 2016

If a vessel has a reportable oil, chemical or other material spillage or they identify a deficiency relating to the VGP effluent requirements the vessel should document the incident in accordance with the operators Safety Management System and Section 4 of the VGP (Inspections, Monitoring, reporting, and recordkeeping).

Should you have any specific questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Canada Enforces North American Emission Control Area Regulations

On May 8, 2013, Transport Canada announced full adoption and enforcement of the North American Emission Control Area (NA-ECA). Adopted by the IMO in March 2010, the NA-ECA applies to ships of 400+ GRT navigating in designated coastal waters under the jurisdictions of Canada, the United States and France (for Saint-Pierre and Miquelon) south of 60° North latitude. The exact coordinates defining the boundaries of the NA-ECA are contained in MEPC.1/Circ.723 and MEPC.190(60). Since the resolution’s effective date of August 2012, compliance with the NA-ECA in Canadian waters has been voluntary. Within ECAS, the sulphur content of fuel oil (expressed in terms of % m/m – that is, by weight) must be no more than 1.00% m/m; falling to 0.10% m/m on and after 1 January 2015. United States and Canadian Port State Control Inspectors will be verifying compliance with NA-ECA regulations during their inspections by reviewing bunker delivery notes, bunker analysis reports, and HSFO to LSFO changeover procedures and recordkeeping.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

U.S. E.P.A Expands Enforcement and Monitoring of NA-ECA

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has advised that it has commenced conducting overflights for purposes of testing the plume emissions of commercial vessels to ensure compliance with MARPOL Annex VI fuel standard requirements. The EPA, in conjunction with the United States Coast Guard commenced enforcement of the North American ECA on August 1, 2012. Vessels operating in the North American ECA are required to utilize fuel oil with sulfur content not in excess of 1.00 percent (10,000 ppm) (The maximum sulfur content is to be reduced even further to .10 percent effective January 1, 2015.) The recent announcement from the EPA indicates that at present the overflights will be limited to the upper Chesapeake Bay. However, this is understood to be a test program and the overflights are ultimately expected to be extended to other areas of the ECA. The implementation of this overflight program, along with recent reported instances of vessels being targeted for violations in the North American ECA, provide clear evidence that as we are approaching the one-year anniversary of the effective enforcement date of the ECA, the EPA and USCG are intensifying their enforcement efforts. Vessel owners and operators should be guided accordingly to ensure compliance with the required fuel standards as well as to verify that all required records are being maintained properly, including the vessel's fuel oil changeover logbook, and that the required fuel oil samples are being maintained.



ISPS Annual Exercises

Company Security Exercises must be conducted once each calendar year, with no more than 18 months between each exercise. Exercises must test communications, coordination, resource availability, and response. Each vessel should carry documentation that the Company exercise was conducted, even if the vessel did not directly participate in the exercise.

Operation of Inert Gas Systems and Oil Discharge Monitoring Equipment

Many older tank vessels we attend are equipped with Inert Gas Systems and Oil Discharge Monitoring Equipment (ODME), however due to the nature of the cargoes they carry, seldom, if ever use them. During USCG Certificate of Compliance (COC) inspections, the vessel's officers are frequently unfamiliar with the operation of these systems due to their lack of use. On some occasions, the equipment has been found to be inoperable, with no recent history of testing or preventive maintenance. Regardless of whether or not these systems are used during a vessel's normal operation, they must remain in good working condition, and the appropriate officers and crew must be familiar enough with their operation to demonstrate testing and function at the request of the USCG inspector. USCG inspectors will routinely check Oil Record Book Part II for entries noting periodic testing of the ODME. Regardless of whether or not the ODME is used, periodic testing must be conducted and recorded in accordance with manufacturer's recommendation and/or company policy. Failure to properly operate the ODME or Inert Gas System will lead to a deficiency, and possibly raise concerns that the approved Safety Management System is not properly implemented. Please ensure that your officers and crew can properly demonstrate these systems, especially when your vessel is due for a COC inspection.

USCG Inspection Tip

During a U.S. port call, the ship's agent will take several certificates ashore for Customs clearance. We recommend that the vessel retain copies of all certificates taken ashore in case the USCG comes aboard for an inspection. Copies of U.S. Customs tonnage tax and user fee receipts are not necessary for a USCG exam.



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Blocked Quick-Closing Fuel Shutoff Valves Will Lead to a Detention

Upon reviewing the USCG's monthly report of IMO reportable vessel Detentions, we have noticed an increase in Detentions due to quick-closing fuel shutoff valves to fuel oil or diesel oil tanks being disabled or blocked in an open position. SOLAS Chapter II-2, Regulation 15 / 2.5 requires that **"every oil fuel pipe which, if damaged, would allow oil to escape from a storage, settling, or daily service tank situated above the double bottom, shall be fitted with a cock or valve directly on the tank capable of being closed from a safe position outside the space concerned in the event of a fire occurring in the space in which the tanks are situated. In the special case of deep tanks situated in any shaft or pipe tunnel or similar space, valves on the tank shall be fitted, but control in the event of fire may be effected by means of an additional valve on the pipe or pipes outside the tunnel or similar space. If such additional valve is fitted in the machinery space, it shall be operated from a position outside the space."**

This is not a new regulation, however the number of Detentions for this deficiency has increased over the last few months. This tells us that the USCG has recently increased their awareness of this issue, and are on a sharp lookout for disabled or blocked quick-closing fuel shutoff valves. As a Detention can lead to an increased number of USCG inspections for both the vessel and other vessels operated by the same Management, it is worthwhile to inspect all quick-closing fuel shutoff valves prior to arriving in U.S. port to ensure they are not blocked and are operating as intended.

CSI Tip:

When contacting CSI to conduct a Qualified Individual Notification Drill or to report an actual incident, please use our 24-Hour Response Telephone Number (912-233-8181) as our primary point of contact. This number is monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If for some reason, this number connects you to a voice mailbox, please leave a detailed message of call one of us on our mobile phone as directed by the message.



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