
4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT
LONDON SE1 7SR
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611 Fax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210

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LIST OF SPECIAL AREAS UNDER MARPOL AND PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE SEA AREAS

1 This circular is prepared for ease of reference by all concerned.

Special Areas under MARPOL

2 The MARPOL Convention defines certain sea areas as "**Special Areas**" in which, for technical reasons relating to their oceanographical and ecological condition and to their sea traffic, the adoption of special mandatory methods for the prevention of sea pollution is required. Under the Convention, these Special Areas are provided with a higher level of protection than other sea areas. They are designated by IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) by amendments to the relevant MARPOL Annexes. There are such areas under MARPOL Annexes I, II, IV and V. Under MARPOL Annex VI, such areas are called Emission Control Areas.

3 Annex 1 to this circular contains a list of Special Areas and Emission Control Areas under MARPOL. It also provides information on the adoption date of amendments to the MARPOL Annexes as appropriate and the date of entry into force for such amendments as well as the date when the more stringent measures took effect for the Special Areas.

Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas

4 The 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.

5 The MEPC, recognizing the importance of this issue, consequently defined PSSA as a sea area that needs special protection through action by IMO because of its significance for recognized ecological, socio-economic, or scientific attributes, where such attributes may be vulnerable to damage by international shipping activities.

6 IMO, through the 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 Since 1990, the MEPC has assessed and designated 14 PSSAs in accordance with the PSSA Guidelines adopted by the IMO Assembly. The key details of every PSSA are provided in annex 2 to this circular. It may be noted that the annex also contains information on the proposing State(s), the APMs and the date of the MEPC resolutions designating the PSSAs.

ANNEX 1

LIST OF SPECIAL 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	2 Nov 1973	2 Oct 1983	2 Oct 1983
Baltic Sea	2 Nov 1973	2 Oct 1983	2 Oct 1983
Black Sea	2 Nov 1973	2 Oct 1983	2 Oct 1983
Red Sea	2 Nov 1973	2 Oct 1983	*
"Gulfs" area	2 Nov 1973	2 Oct 1983	1 Aug 2008 (Resolution MEPC.168(56))
Gulf of Aden	1 Dec 1987 (Resolution MEPC.29(25))	1 Apr 1989	*
Antarctic area	16 Nov 1990 (Resolution MEPC.42(30))	17 Mar 1992	17 Mar 1992
North West European waters	25 Sept 1997 (Resolution MEPC.75(40))	1 Feb 1999	1 Aug 1999 (Resolution MEPC.77(41))
Oman area of the Arabian Sea	15 Oct 2004 (Resolution MEPC.117(52))	1 Jan 2007	*
Southern South African waters	13 Oct 2006 (Resolution MEPC.154(55))	1 Mar 2008	1 Aug 2008 (Resolution MEPC.167(56))
MARPOL Annex II: Noxious Liquid Substances			
Antarctic area	30 Oct 1992 (Resolution MEPC.57(33))	1 Jul 1994	1 Jul 1994
MARPOL Annex IV: Sewage			
Baltic Sea	15 July 2011	1 July 2012	1 July 2013 (Resolution MEPC.200(62))
MARPOL Annex V: Garbage			
Mediterranean Sea	2 Nov 1973	31 Dec 1988	1 May 2009 (Resolution MEPC.172(57))
Baltic Sea	2 Nov 1973	31 Dec 1988	1 Oct 1989 (Resolution MEPC.31(26))
Black Sea	2 Nov 1973	31 Dec 1988	*
Red Sea	2 Nov 1973	31 Dec 1988	*
"Gulfs" area	2 Nov 1973	31 Dec 1988	1 Aug 2008 (Resolution MEPC.168(56))

Special Areas	Amendments adopted to the MARPOL Annex	Entry into force of the amendments	More stringent measures in effect from
MARPOL Annex V: Garbage (cont'd)			
North Sea	17 Oct 1989 (Resolution MEPC.36(28))	18 Feb 1991	18 Feb 1991 (Resolution MEPC.37(28))
Antarctic area (south of latitude 60 degrees south)	16 Nov 1990 (Resolution MEPC.42(30))	17 Mar 1992	17 Mar 1992
Wider Caribbean region including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea	4 July 1991 (Resolution MEPC.48(31))	4 Apr 1993	1 May 2011 (Resolution MEPC.191(60))
MARPOL Annex VI: Air pollution (Emission Control Areas)			
Baltic Sea (SO _x)	26 Sept 1997	19 May 2005	19 May 2006
North Sea (SO _x)	22 Jul 2005 (Resolution MEPC.132(53))	22 Nov 2006	22 Nov 2007
North American (SO _x , and NO _x and PM)	26 Mar 2010 (Resolution MEPC.190(60))	1 Aug 2011	1 Aug 2012
United States Caribbean Sea (SO _x , NO _x and PM)	15 Jul 2011 (Resolution MEPC.202(62))	1 Jan 2013	1 Jan 2014

* The Special Area requirements for these areas have not taken effect because of lack of notifications from MARPOL Parties whose coastlines border the relevant Special Areas on the existence of adequate reception facilities (regulations 38.6 of MARPOL Annex I and 5(4) of MARPOL Annex V).

ANNEX 2

LIST OF PSSAS DESIGNATED BY MEPC

PSSA	Proposing State(s)	Associated Protective Measures ¹	MEPC resolution
Great Barrier Reef	Australia	IMO-recommended Australian system of pilotage; mandatory ship reporting system	September 1990 (Resolution MEPC.44(30))
Archipelago of Sabana-Camaguey	Cuba	Area to be avoided	September 1997 (Resolution MEPC.74(40))
Sea Area Around Malpelo Island	Colombia	Area to be avoided	March 2002 (Resolution MEPC.97(47))
Marine Area Around the Florida Keys	United States	Areas to be avoided; mandatory no anchoring areas	March 2002 (Resolution MEPC.98(47))
Wadden Sea	Netherlands, Denmark, Germany	Mandatory deep water route	October 2002 (Resolution MEPC.101(48))
Paracas National Reserve	Peru	Area to be avoided	July 2003 (Resolution MEPC.106(49))
Western European Waters	Belgium, France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom	Mandatory ship reporting system	October 2004 (Resolution MEPC.121(52))
Torres Strait as an extension to GBR PSSA	Australia and Papua New Guinea	IMO-recommended Australian system of pilotage; two-way route	July 2003 (Resolution MEPC.133(53))
Canary Islands	Spain	Areas to be avoided; traffic separation systems; recommended routes; mandatory ship reporting system	March 2004 (Resolution MEPC.134(53))
Galapagos Archipelago	Ecuador	Area to be avoided; mandatory ship reporting system; recommended tracks	March 2004 (Resolution MEPC.135(53))
Baltic Sea Area	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden	Traffic separation schemes, deepwater route, areas to be avoided, mandatory ship reporting system, MARPOL Special Area; MARPOL SO _x Emission Control Area	March 2004 (Resolution MEPC.136(53))

¹ 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.

PSSA	Proposing State(s)	Associated Protective Measures¹	MEPC resolution
Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (North-western Hawaiian Islands)	United States	Areas to be avoided; recommended/mandatory ship reporting system	March 2007 (Resolution MEPC.171(57))
Strait of Bonifacio	France and Italy	Recommendation on navigation	July 2011 (Resolution MEPC.204(62))
Saba Bank (Caribbean Island of Saba)	The Netherlands	Area to be avoided; Mandatory no anchoring area	Approved in principle in July 2011. To be formally designated by MEPC 64 in Oct 2012
