



# The MARPOL Convention and the Designation of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area

## About MARPOL

The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) is the principal multilateral environmental agreement covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships. MARPOL applies to pollution from both operational and accidental causes. The Convention was initially adopted in 1973 at the International Maritime Organization, and subsequently modified by the Protocol of 1978.

At that time the 1973 MARPOL Convention had not yet entered into force, therefore the 1978 MARPOL Protocol absorbed the parent Convention and the combined instrument entered into force on 2 October 1983. The Protocol introduced stricter regulations for the survey and certification of ships.

MARPOL governs the design and equipment of ships, establishes a system of certificates and inspections, and requires states to provide reception facilities for ship-generated wastes.

The Convention includes six technical Annexes, each concerned with regulating different kinds of pollution from ships. Annex I covers prevention of pollution by oil and Annex II covers prevention of pollution by noxious liquid substances carried in bulk. These two Annexes are compulsory for all Parties to MARPOL. Annexes III to VI (see Box 1) are optional.

Most Annexes also include provisions for the designation of Special Areas where strict controls on operational discharges are imposed. The Wider Caribbean Region has been designated as a Special Area under MARPOL Annex V.

When a country ratifies MARPOL, all ships registered in that country are subject to the requirements of the Convention, regardless of where they sail.

### Box 1:

#### MARPOL ANNEXES

**Annex I:** Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Oil

**Annex II:** Regulations for the Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk

**Annex III:** Prevention of Pollution by Harmful Substances Carried by Sea in Packaged Form

**Annex IV:** Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships

**Annex V:** Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships

**Annex VI:** Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships

## Ratification Status of MARPOL and Annexes in the Caribbean

	MARPOL Convention and Annexes I & II	Annex III	Annex IV	Annex V	Annex VI
Antigua and Barbuda	X	X	X	X	X
Bahamas	X	X		X	X
Barbados	X	X	X	X	X
Belize	X	X	X	X	X
Cuba	X			X	
Dominica	X	X		X	
Dominican Republic	X	X	X	X	
Grenada					
Guyana	X	X	X	X	X
Haiti					
Jamaica	X	X	X	X	X
St. Kitts and Nevis	X	X	X	X	X
St. Lucia	X	X	X	X	
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	X	X	X	X	X
Suriname	X	X	X	X	X
Trinidad and Tobago	X	X	X	X	X

**x = Ratification**

## Operations of MARPOL

MARPOL is one of several conventions of the International Maritime Organization. The Organization consists of an Assembly, a Council and five main Committees which are responsible for maritime safety, marine environment protection, legal and technical issues. The Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) addresses the protection and control of pollution from ships by adopting and amending conventions such as MARPOL to ensure their enforcement.

The MEPC is assisted in its work by sub-committees which address a range of topics such as bulk liquids and gases, carriage of dangerous goods, solid cargoes and containers, and fire protection. Membership on MEPC and its sub-committees is open to all Member States and meetings are convened biannually. The Caribbean is usually well represented at these meetings. There is also participation by regional organizations such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Regional Activity Centre of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre for the Wider Caribbean Region(RAC/REMPEITC-Carib).

## Regional Implementation of MARPOL

There are several regional organizations which play an indispensable role in the prevention of marine pollution in the Caribbean.





The IMO has an Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme which is facilitated in the Caribbean by the Office of the Regional Maritime Advisor in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The purpose of the programme is to assist developing countries in building their human and institutional capacity to enable them to comply with MARPOL.



The RAC/REMPEITC is located in Curaçao and was established to help countries in the Wider Caribbean Region prevent and respond to major pollution incidents in the marine environment. It develops several activities throughout the region such as assisting governments in establishing national response systems through training, risk assessments and

simulation exercises. Emphasis is also placed on conducting marine pollution education training exercises.



The Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) is a branch of the United Nations Environment Programme, and is based in Kingston, Jamaica. The CEP works to cultivate public awareness on environmental issues, through education and training. Attempts are being made, through Training of Trainers Programmes in Marine Protected Areas Management, to increase the number of persons who are qualified to implement MARPOL.

## Designated National Authorities

In countries that are Party to MARPOL, the designated national authority is the organization which is tasked with the responsibility of implementation of MARPOL. This involves the monitoring and control of conditions which may impact on the marine environment of the region.

## Designation of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area under MARPOL Annex V



**The Wider Caribbean Area  
(Image via cep.unep.org)**

Special areas are provided with a higher level of protection than other areas. They are defined under MARPOL Annex V as areas for which strict rules apply for the discharge of garbage from ships. Vessels operating within the Wider Caribbean Region are prohibited from discharging any garbage into the sea with the exception of food wastes, which may be discharged if the vessel is at least 12 nautical miles from the nearest land. It is preferable for all garbage and other wastes to be retained on board for disposal at adequate shore reception facilities.

The Governments of all countries which have ratified MARPOL Annex V are obliged to provide facilities at ports and terminals for the reception of garbage without causing undue delay to ships and according to the needs of the ships using them.

Initially it was thought that there was a dearth of port reception facilities throughout the Caribbean. However, between 2007 and 2009, RAC/REMPEITC-Carib conducted a series of regional seminars aimed at sensitization with regard to the requirements of MARPOL Annex V. During these seminars, it was realized that the majority of the ports in the region had adequate port reception facilities, but their notification to IMO was lacking. Having been made aware of this issue, the relevant action was taken at an MEPC meeting of IMO and the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area under MARPOL Annex V was enforced on May 1, 2011.



INTERNATIONAL  
MARITIME  
ORGANIZATION

# Global Integrated Shipping Information System

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### Welcome to GISIS



**Maritime Security**  
Information communicated under the provisions of SOLAS regulation XI-2/13 (SOLAS chapter X1-2 and the ISPS Code).



**Recognized Organizations**  
Information submitted by Member States under MSC/Circ.1010-MEPC/Circ.382.



**Marine Casualties and Incidents**  
Data on marine casualties and incidents, as defined by circulars MSC-MEPC.3/Circ.3.



**Port Reception Facilities**  
Data on the available port reception facilities for the reception of ship-generated waste.



**Contact Points**  
Electronic database for Contact Points.



**Pollution Prevention Equipment**  
Pollution prevention equipment required by MARPOL 73/78.

The Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) is an online IMO database. It includes a port-reception facility database (PRFD) which provides information on the available port reception facilities for various kinds of waste from ships. It also contains information with regard to the procedure for reporting alleged inadequacies of port reception facilities. It also provides the contact details of national authorities responsible for handling such reports and outlines the follow-up response by port states to reported cases of alleged inadequacies of port reception facilities. The PRFD is available to the general public through the GISIS web-page at [gisis.imo.org](https://gisis.imo.org) on a view-only basis, with the possibility of searching the database and retrieving information on the available reception facilities per country, port and specific type of waste.

## Port State Control

Each national maritime authority has to ensure that foreign merchant ships visiting its ports comply with the standards laid down in the relevant conventions. To this end, Port State Control (PSC) is the inspection of foreign ships in national ports by inspectors who are called PSC Officers. This is done to verify that the master and officers on board the ship are competent.

In order to ensure compliance with MARPOL, PSC Officers inspect the documentation of the vessel to ensure it has the relevant valid certificates for air and oil pollution prevention, documents of compliance for the carriage of dangerous goods and record books of oil and garbage disposal. The physical structure of the ship is also inspected to ensure that there is no risk to the safety of the crew or the marine environment. PSC Officers in the Caribbean have generally expressed satisfaction with the use of reception facilities and the level of awareness amongst the crew about the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area.



## Future Challenges

In spite of the ratification of MARPOL throughout the Caribbean, pollution from shipping continues to pose a problem. Therefore, at MEPC meetings, topics with regard to MARPOL figure prominently on the agenda. At the most recently concluded meeting, issues such as the implementation of Annex VI and the measures for the control of emissions and the prevention of air pollution from ships were discussed. There are also new guidelines for the implementation of Annex V and the requirement for ships to carry garbage management plans. The issue of harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water is particularly important as the region confronts the challenge of invasive alien species. Generally there needs to be rigorous awareness-raising about the Convention, about the challenges facing the region, and about the importance of marine pollution prevention. Cooperation among the various players in the maritime industry is vital to the successful implementation of MARPOL.



## Designated National Authorities for MARPOL in CARICOM Member Countries

### Antigua & Barbuda

Department of Marine Services  
& Merchant Shipping  
Tel: + 1 268 562 3426  
Fax: + 1 268 462 4358  
[marineserv@candw.ag](mailto:marineserv@candw.ag)  
[www.antiguamarine.com](http://www.antiguamarine.com)

### Bahamas

Bahamas Maritime Authority,  
Tel: + (44) 207 562 1300  
Fax: + (44) 207 614 0681  
[dhutchinson@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:dhutchinson@bahamasmaritime.com)  
[bahamasmaritime.com](http://bahamasmaritime.com)

### Barbados

Environmental Protection  
Department  
Tel: 1 246 310 3600  
Fax: 1 246 228 7103  
[enveng@caribsurf.com](mailto:enveng@caribsurf.com)  
[www.epd.gov.bb](http://www.epd.gov.bb)

### Belize

The Belize Port Authority  
Tel: + 501 223 0714  
Fax: + 501 223 0710  
[info@portauthority.bz](mailto:info@portauthority.bz)  
[www.portauthority.bz](http://www.portauthority.bz)

### Dominica

Ministry of Public Works,  
Energy and Ports  
Tel: 1 767 223 3072  
Fax: 1 767 448 4807  
[imtdi@cwdom.dm](mailto:imtdi@cwdom.dm)  
[www.dominica-registry.com](http://www.dominica-registry.com)

### Guyana

Ministry of Public Works  
Tel: + 592 226 3356  
Fax: + 592 226 9581  
[marad@networks.gy.com](mailto:marad@networks.gy.com)

### Jamaica

Maritime Authority of Jamaica  
Tel: 1 876 754 7260  
Fax: 1 876 754 7256  
[maj@jamaicaships.com](mailto:maj@jamaicaships.com)  
[www.jamaicaships.com](http://www.jamaicaships.com)

### St. Kitts and Nevis

Ministry of Tourism and  
International Transport  
Tel: 1 869 467 1385  
Fax: 1 869 663 8886  
[maritimeaffairs@yahoo.com](mailto:maritimeaffairs@yahoo.com)

### St. Lucia

St. Lucia Air and  
Sea Ports Authority  
Tel: 1 758 452 2893  
Fax: 1 758 452 2062  
[slaspa@candw.lc](mailto:slaspa@candw.lc)  
[www.slaspa.com](http://www.slaspa.com)

### St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Maritime Administration  
Tel: 1 784 456 1378  
Fax: 1 784 451 2445  
[svgmarad@gmail.com](mailto:svgmarad@gmail.com)  
[www.svg-marad.com](http://www.svg-marad.com)

### Suriname

Maritime Authority of Suriname  
Tel: + 597 476 749  
Fax: + 597 472 940  
[mamafo@mas.sr](mailto:mamafo@mas.sr)

### Trinidad & Tobago

Maritime Services Division  
Tel: 1 868 625 3858  
Fax: 1 868 624 5884  
[msddir@tstt.net.tt](mailto:msddir@tstt.net.tt)

## Useful Links

### **Regional Activity Center/Regional Marine Pollution**

Email: [rempeitc@cep.unep.org](mailto:rempeitc@cep.unep.org)  
Website: [cep.unep.org/racrempeitc](http://cep.unep.org/racrempeitc)

### **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)- Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP)**

Email: [rcu@cep.unep.org](mailto:rcu@cep.unep.org)  
Website: [cep.unep.org](http://cep.unep.org)

### **Wider Caribbean Initiative for Ship-Generated Waste**

Email: [unep@iwlearn.org](mailto:unep@iwlearn.org)  
Website: [iwlearn.net/iw-project/585](http://iwlearn.net/iw-project/585)

### **Caribbean Memorandum on Port State Control**

Email: [caribmou@caribbeanmou.org](mailto:caribmou@caribbeanmou.org)  
Website: [www.caribbeanmou.org](http://www.caribbeanmou.org)

### **International Maritime Organization**

Email: [info@imo.org](mailto:info@imo.org)  
Website: [www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org)

### **MARPOL, International Maritime Organization**

Website: [www.imo.org/about/conventions/listofconventions/pages/international-convention-for-the-prevention-of-pollution-from-ships-\(marpol\).aspx](http://www.imo.org/about/conventions/listofconventions/pages/international-convention-for-the-prevention-of-pollution-from-ships-(marpol).aspx)

### **Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS)**

Website: [gis.imo.org/Public/Default.aspx](http://gis.imo.org/Public/Default.aspx)

### **Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat**

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