



PORT OF CORK
NOTICE TO MARINERS
NO. 15 of 2018

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Prohibition on the Discharge of Exhaust Gas Scrubber Wash Water

The discharge of exhaust gas scrubber wash water is prohibited with the limits of the Port of Cork Company. This applies to all vessels berthed at any berth within the port's jurisdiction and vessels on transit to and from any berth or anchorage. Upon entering port limits any vessel fitted with exhaust gas scrubbers, must run on a "closed loop system" for the duration of the port stay.

Background

The recent tightening of the fuel sulphur limits has promoted the use of exhaust gas scrubbers to reduce sulphur emissions to air. While exhaust gas scrubbers reduce the atmospheric emissions of a number of pollutants, wash water discharges from scrubbers operated in certain modes may have significant environmental and ecological impacts. Of particular concern are the emissions of heavy metals, polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), nitrogen oxides (NOx), and the acidification of receiving waters.

A number of these pollutants are identified as priority substances requiring the introduction of control measures to progressively reduce their discharge as set out in Article 16 of Directive 2000/60/EC (The Water Framework Directive), and for which environmental quality standards have been set in Directive 2008/105/EC (The Environmental Quality Standards Directive).

Currently there is no assessment of the long term environmental impacts of the use of exhaust gas scrubbers. However, given the potential for impact on sensitive ecosystems, and the abundance of Natura 2000 sites designated in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) within the jurisdiction of the Port Company and its environs, ***it is the policy of The Port of Cork Company that wash water from exhaust gas scrubber systems shall not be discharged to surface waters within the jurisdiction of the Port Company.***

This is in keeping with the Precautionary Principle, as detailed in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, aimed at ensuring a higher level of environmental protection through preventative decision-taking in the case of risk.

References:

- Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) & Water Framework Directive
- European Union (Sulphur Content of Marine Fuels) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 361 of 2015)
- http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/MN51of2015_EUSulphurContentofMarineFuels%20-%20v03.pdf

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12th November 2018.