



U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590
<http://www.dot.gov/briefing.htm>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 16, 1998

CG 9-98

Contact: Cathy McDermott

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**COAST GUARD PROPOSES RULE TO HELP CONTROL
INTRODUCTION AND SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES**

In a move to protect the marine environment, the U.S. Coast Guard today announced a proposed regulation and voluntary guidelines to help control the invasion of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) into U.S. waters.

“President Clinton is committed to protecting the environment, and we have made it a priority to protect and enhance communities and the natural environment affected by transportation,” U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater said. “This rulemaking will help protect U.S. marine ecosystems from forms of aquatic life that are not native to U.S. waters and that could pose a risk to people, native species or U.S. economic growth.”

Invaders that have made the most dramatic impact in recent years include:

- zebra mussels, which invaded the United States in 1986, which now are found in 19 states and 2 Canadian provinces, and which are expected to cost the Great Lakes region alone more than \$500 million by the year 2000;
- Asian clams, which filter the entire volume of northern San Francisco Bay more than once per day, severely disrupting the food chain;
- hydrilla, an aquatic plant that clogs waterways in 14 states and costs Florida alone more than \$14 million per year to control;
- purple loosestrife, another aquatic plant that has invaded 40 states where it displaces native vegetation and disrupts ecosystems.

The Coast Guard cautioned that these are only a few of the ANS that have recently invaded North America and that U.S. waters also face invasion by a wide range of invading microscopic organisms, including viruses, bacteria, protozoa and fungi that may be harmful to people or fish.

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Ballast water from ships is the largest pathway for the intercontinental transport and spread of ANS, the Coast Guard said. This rulemaking proposes mandatory reporting and sampling procedures for nearly all vessels entering U.S. waters after voyages from foreign ports or other nearshore waters beyond the open ocean.

The rulemaking will implement the National Invasive Species Act of 1996, amend existing regulations for the Great Lakes ecosystem, and establish voluntary ballast water exchange guidelines for all other waters of the United States.

Comments on this proposed rulemaking are due by June 9, 1998. They should be addressed to the Docket Management Facility, (USCG-98-3423), U.S. Department of Transportation, Room PL 401, 400 Seventh St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

Additional information and copies of the proposed rule are available from Lt. Larry Greene, project manager, Office of Response (G-MOR), 2100 Second St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20593-0001. His telephone number is (202) 267-0500, and requests may be faxed to (202) 267-4547. An electronic version of the notice is available on the Internet's World Wide Web at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/aces140.html

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, June 23, 1998

CG 14-98

Contact: Cathy McDermott

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Coast Guard to Begin Enforcing New Safety Code for Ships

The U.S. Coast Guard today reminded owners and operators of ships that, beginning July 1, 1998, it will enforce a new international safety management code and that it takes this responsibility seriously.

“Safety is President Clinton’s highest transportation priority, and the international safety code will improve the safety of ships calling on U.S. ports,” Transportation Secretary Slater said. In peacetime, the Coast Guard is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

On Dec. 24, 1997, the U.S. Coast Guard published a final rule to improve marine safety by establishing standards for safety management systems for certain U.S. vessels to comply with the ISM Code for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). The standards apply to commercial vessels on international voyages including those that carry more than 12 passengers, tankers, bulk freight vessels and high speed freight vessels of 500 gross tons or more.

Under an interim rule that became effective Jan. 26, 1998, these vessels, unless they are less than 500 gross tons and carry more than 12 passengers, must provide notification of their ISM Code certification status 24 hours before entering a U.S. port.

Beginning July 1, 1998, ships attempting to enter the United States without ISM Code certification will be denied entry and must prove that they have achieved certification under the ISM Code before the Coast Guard will permit them to enter a U.S. port.

Enforcement policy and procedures for foreign vessels affected have been published in a Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC 4-98). It is available on the Internet at: www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/nvic/index.htm.

The Coast Guard will share with other Port State Control authorities information on ships which have been banned from the U.S. because they have not complied with the ISM Code. The Coast Guard also will publish a list of these ships on its Port State Control Web Site at: www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/psc/psc.htm.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 6, 1998

CG 24-98

Contact: Cathy McDermott

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Coast Guard Publishes Final Rule On Security for Passenger Vessels and Terminals

The U.S. Coast Guard today implemented requirements for security of passenger vessels and passenger terminals. This rule is intended to deter or mitigate the results of terrorism and other unlawful acts against passenger vessels and passenger terminals.

The hijacking of the cruise ship Achille Lauro in 1985 demonstrated the potential for terrorist acts against passenger vessels. The number of passengers carried on a large passenger vessel is far greater than the number carried on the largest airplane. The Coast Guard recognizes that there are many avenues for the introduction of weapons onto passenger vessels and that many lives are at stake. This rule is intended to address passenger security before acts of terrorism in the western hemisphere occur.

On July 18, 1996, the Coast Guard published an interim rule requiring the development of security plans by passenger vessels and passenger terminals. The interim rule required all passenger vessels and passenger terminals covered by the rule to submit plans by Oct. 16, 1996. Today's final rule makes permanent the provisions of the interim rule.

Implementation of the interim rule has been highly successful, the Coast Guard said. The passenger vessels and passenger terminals affected by this rule have developed plans to ensure that they are prepared to handle terrorist threats or acts. Additionally, the Department of Transportation, the Coast Guard and industry have cooperatively embarked on several related projects to enhance security for these vessels and terminals.

Approximately 4 million passengers a year are expected to benefit from the security measures this rule imposes on an estimated 120 passenger vessels and 53 passenger terminals. Of the passenger vessels, approximately 117 are cruise vessels carrying in excess of 100 passengers operating out of U.S. ports. All of the terminals service these cruise vessels.

The final rule is in today's *Federal Register*. An electronic version of the final rule is available via the World Wide Web at: http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/

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