



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

Commander
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Ballast Water Management System Incompatibility Issues in the Great Lakes

The Ninth Coast Guard District is issuing this Marine Safety Information Bulletin (MSIB) to prevent potential violations of U.S. Coast Guard Ballast Water Management regulations outlined in Title 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 151, Subpart C. The U.S. Coast Guard has observed that Ballast Water Management Systems (BWMS) that use ultraviolet (UV) light as the primary treatment method may sometimes have difficulty functioning in Great Lakes ports during periods where small particles and other sediments remain suspended in the water, which is a condition known as turbidity.

In accordance with ballast water management regulations outlined in 33 CFR § 151.1515(b), shipboard BWMS are required to be used if installed, and if the system is not able to function within design parameters as approved by 46 CFR 162.060, the vessel is required to report this condition immediately to the cognizant Captain of the Port (COTP) who may impose further operational restrictions.

If a vessel's installed BWMS is not functioning as required (i.e. not operating at adequate intensity and/or flow rate to meet discharge standard) in Great Lakes ports due to turbidity or other conditions, the operator should be prepared to discuss contingency options in accordance with the vessel's BWM plan and provide the following information to minimize potential disruption to scheduled operations:

- Alternative and available operational strategies based on the vessel's capabilities, route, and voyage duration;
- Verification of troubleshooting methods outlined in the approved system's operating manual; and/or
- Ability to employ alternate ballast water management methods such as retaining water on board or utilizing water from the U.S. public water system within certified clean ballast tanks, as outlined in 33 CFR § 151.1510.

Operators should be aware that U.S. states adjacent to the Great Lakes may also have distinct BWM regulatory requirements. It is imperative that companies select a BWMS that is compatible with the vessel's intended ports of call, and work with BWMS manufacturers and port facilities to validate that ballast water discharge contingency plans are viable for conditions found in Great Lakes ports. Other factors to consider when attempting to mitigate issues with turbidity might include location of ballast water intake, orientation of vessel, under keel clearance, and weather/seasonal impacts to water conditions.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Mr. Kirk Beckmann at (216) 902-6050.

Sincerely,

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