

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

U.S. Coast Guard (G-MVI-1/83)  
400 SEVENTH STREET  
Washington, DC 20590  
PHONE. 202-426-1464

NVC 7-74  
6 DEC 1974

NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR NO. 7-74

Subj: Oil-water Separators; acceptance of

1. Purpose. The purpose of this Circular is to advise vessel owners, operators and Officers in Charge of Marine Inspection of the Commandant's policy concerning Title 33 Code of Federal Regulations 155.400 regarding acceptance of oily water separators and exceptions permitted for vessels so equipped.
2. Background. The vessel design and equipment regulations in 33 C.F.R. 155 in part satisfy Section 311 (j) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (FWPCA) which requires the Coast Guard to, "establish procedures, methods, and equipment and other requirements for equipment to prevent discharge of oil from vessels...". For the disposal of oily bilge slops the approach has been from two directions. The first approach, 33 C.F.R. 155.340 through 155.360 provides for the discharge of oily bilge slops through fixed piping systems, or by other means, to a shoreside facility. The other approach is through the installation of oily water processing equipment acceptable to the Commandant. A vessel equipped with an acceptable means of processing oily bilge slops need not meet the piping requirements of Sections 155.340 through 155.360.
3. Discussion. The Coast Guard intends to promote and encourage the development of oil-water separators leading to the eventual approval of separating devices, interface detectors and effluent monitors. pursuant to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973. This Circular establishes the general criterion for acceptance of oil-water separators installed on board United States and foreign vessels to process oily bilge mixtures, pending the development of official approval procedures.
4. Action.
  - a. Pursuant to Title 33 Code of Federal Regulations 155.400, the Commandant has determined that any oil-water separator for processing oily bilge mixtures is acceptable, which without dilution, emulsification or the addition of chemicals will not discharge a harmful quantity of oil within the meaning of Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations 110.
  - b. Oil-water separators installed on board United States Inspected vessels must be installed in accordance with Title 46 Code of Federal Regulations, Subchapter "F", Engineering Regulations and Subchapter "J", Electrical Engineering Regulations. Installations on board non-certificated United States vessels must be in accordance with good marine practices. For foreign vessels, the installation need only be physically verified. Effluent testing of oil-water separators is not considered necessary.

- c. Any vessel upon which an oil-water separator is properly Installed, maintained and operated to process oily bilge mixtures Is exempt from the bilge discharge piping requirements of Title 33 Code of Federal Regulations 155.340 through 155.360.
- d. Acceptance of an oily water separator in accordance with this policy does not Imply Coast Guard endorsement of the device. Neither does it constitute an exemption from civil or criminal prosecution pursuant to Title 33 United States Code 1321 (b)(5) and (b)(6) should a discharge of oil in a harmful quantity occur.
- e. Failure to have a properly operating oil-water separator or to comply with 33 C.F.R. 155.340, 155.350, or. 155.360, as appropriate, may result In assessment of a penalty pursuant to 33 U.S.C. 1321 (j)(2).
- f. Devices installed under this acceptance program may remain in service so long as they operate properly. Replacement devices must be approved If installed after the effective date of specifications for Coast Guard approval of oil-water separators for oily bilge mixtures.

  
**W. M. DENKERT**  
**Chief, Office of Merchant Marine Safety**

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NVC 7-74, CH-1  
4 Nov 1980

NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR NO. 7-74, CHANGE 1

Subj: CH-1 to NVC 7-74 of 6 December 1974, Subj: Oil-Water Separator.; Acceptance of

1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this Circular is to provide additional information to Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular 7-74 with regard to acceptable installations of oil-water separators.
2. DISCUSSION.
  - a. The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973 (MARPOL) specifies the use of oil-water separators for vessels to which the Convention applies. Recently internationally agreed upon design and testing standard, for oil water separators, bilge monitors and alarms were adopted by the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC) as Resolution A.393(X). On 13 September 1979 (44FRS3352) the Coast Guard issued regulations, based on this Resolution, for the approval of such equipment, 46 CYR 162.050.
  - b. The Coast Guard has tested several units and issued approval certificates under 46 CFR 162.050. Numerous ZMCO member nations have tested and approved equipment in accordance with Resolution A.393(X). Revisions to the existing requirements in 33 CFR 155 currently being developed by the Coast Guard (G-W) will implement this upcoming Marpol requirement for the use of oil-water separators and alarms capable of <15 ppm operation while a vessel is within 12 miles from nearest land. Beyond 12 miles, <100 ppm discharges of bilge or fuel oil tank ballast water will be permitted. When these revisions are implemented, approval in accordance with 46 CER 162.050 will be required for U.S. flag inspected vessels and satisfactory testing to IMCO Resolution A.393(X) will be accepted for all other vessels. It is anticipated that oil-water separators installed prior to the issuance of these regulations will be grandfathered. However, the 15 ppm bilge alarm will not. All alarms must comply with the applicable approval testing standard.
  - c. Operators of vessels regularly visiting foreign ports should be aware that other governments may institute some of the provisions of MARPOL earlier than the Coast Guard timetable and the installation of a separator and monitor/alarm could possibly be a condition of vessel port entry.

3. ACTION. Vessel operators contemplating the installation of an oil-water separator and alarm in lieu of onboard containment should remember that NVC 7-74 still applies but that the use of Coast Guard approved equipment for U.S. flag vessels or IMCO Resolution A.393(X) tested equipment for others is strongly recommended.

  
**HENRY H. BELL**  
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