

Marine Biosecurity Information Note 6

May 2024

Reducing the Marine Biosecurity Risk: Hull cleaning

Background

- Hull cleaning is the **removal of biofouling from vessel* hulls**, this can increase a vessels fuel efficiency and in some international ports, vessels may only be permitted to enter if they have a clean hull.
- Hull biofouling **may contain marine invasive non-native species (INNS)** which if disturbed or removed from the hull may subsequently establish themselves in docks and waterways across our ports.
- **INNS can present a biosecurity risk** to Peel Ports operations. Some of these organisms have also adapted survival strategies which allow larvae to be released when they are forcibly removed from a hull.
- **Hull cleaning can take place either in the water or in a dry dock**, where facilities are available in a port or harbour.
- Cleaning is usually undertaken through the use of specialised divers or in water hull cleaning equipment or devices.
- Hull cleaning and associated waste disposal **may require a permit or marine licence** from regulators or the local Port.
- In Peel Ports hull cleaning **must** only be undertaken with Harbour Master approval.
- If approval is granted, hull cleaning **must** be undertaken in a controlled, banded environment, **all debris** including wash water, paint chippings and biofouling material **must be fully captured and treated** prior to disposal to reduce the risk of INNS transfer.
- There is no international standard for hull cleaning (as of 2024) **Peel Ports have developed their own procedure** which **must be followed by all vessels** wishing to undertake hull cleaning across each port to reduce the risk of INNS spread and transfer into port waters as a result of this activity.

Actions to reduce the biosecurity risk from hull cleaning:

- **Permission must be sought** from the Group Harbour Master.
- The operator must ascertain if a **Marine Works Licence is required from the Port or if a Marine Licence is required from a Regulator.**
- **Pre-arrival/departure inspections** may be requested, **surveys** to identify any invasive species present may also be required prior to the vessel entering into the Statutory Harbour Authority area (e.g. eDNA surveys or specialised dive surveys).
- A **biosecurity risk assessment must be** undertaken by the vessel owner or operator, an [example biosecurity risk assessment](#) is available from the NNSS.
- **Vessel antifoulant certificate may be requested**
- **Where possible hull cleaning should be conducted on land in a bunded area.**
- **All debris** (including wash water, paint chippings and biofouling waste) **must be collected** and appropriately treated prior to disposal. It is the vessel owner or operators responsibility to ensure this is done in compliance with local regulations. The application for any permits or licences (including waste licences) for such activities must be sought by the vessel owner or operator
- **If permission is granted, Peel Ports employees will review the vessel cleaning guidance note to identify any additional conditions. The Group Marine Vessel Biosecurity Compliance Statement must also be signed by the operator.**

** Vessel – refers to mobile and stationary vessels that are capable of marine biofouling accumulation.*