

RESOLUTION LDC.32(11)
AMENDMENTS TO THE GUIDANCE FOR THE APPLICATION OF ANNEX III
(resolution LDC.17(8))

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THE ELEVENTH CONSULTATIVE MEETING,

RECALLING Article I of the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, which provides that Contracting Parties shall individually and collectively promote the effective control of all sources of pollution of the marine environment,

RECALLING FURTHER that amendments to Annex III had been adopted by resolution LDC.26(10) concerning problems which had been encountered with ill-defined wastes that had been proposed for disposal at sea, and the impact of such wastes to marine life and human health,

EMPHASIZING the need that, in accordance with Annex III to the Convention, Contracting Parties, before considering the dumping or incineration of wastes at sea, should ensure that every effort has been made to determine the practical availability of alternative land-based methods of treatment, disposal or elimination of the wastes concerned,

NOTING the discussion which took place within the Scientific Group on Dumping on the need for Contracting Parties, when establishing criteria governing the issue of permits for the dumping of matter at sea, to be guided in their application of the provisions of Annex III to the Convention,

HAVING CONSIDERED the Guidelines for the Implementation and Uniform Interpretation of Annex III to the London Dumping Convention (resolution LDC.17(8)) and the proposed amendments to these guidelines prepared by the Scientific Group on Dumping,

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1 ADOPTS amendments to sections A4 to A6, A9 and C4 of the Guidelines for the Implementation and Uniform Interpretation of Annex III to the London Dumping Convention,

2 RESOLVES that Contracting Parties to the Convention shall take full account of the amended Guidelines for the Implementation and Uniform Interpretation of Annex III as shown in annex when considering the factors set forth in that Annex prior to the issue of any permit for disposal and incineration of matter at sea.

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GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION AND UNIFORM INTERPRETATION
OF ANNEX III* TO THE LONDON DUMPING CONVENTION

Article IV(2): Any permit shall be issued only after careful consideration of all the factors set forth in Annex III, including prior studies of the characteristics of the dumping site, as set forth in Sections B and C of that Annex.

ANNEX III: Provisions to be considered in establishing criteria governing the issue of permits for the dumping of matter at sea, taking into account Article IV(2), include:

Interpretation:

Each authority or authorities designated in accordance with Article VI for the issue of general and special permits for the disposal of wastes and other matter at sea shall, when considering a permit application, carefully study all the factors set out in Annex III. This includes the establishment of procedures and criteria for:

- 1 deciding whether an application for sea disposal should be pursued in the light of the availability of land-based disposal or treatment methods;
- 2 selecting a sea disposal site, including the choice and collection of relevant scientific data to assess the potential hazards to human health, harm to living resources and marine life, damage to amenities or interference with other legitimate uses of the sea;

* For the disposal at sea of radioactive wastes additional requirements recommended by the IAEA have to be taken into account (INFCIRC/205/Add.1/Rev.1). For the control of incineration of wastes at sea specific site selection criteria have been established (Regulation 8 of Addendum to Annex I).

3 choosing appropriate disposal methods and conditions;

4 developing an appropriate monitoring programme.

The above mentioned criteria should enable permit applications to be effectively assessed and likely environmental hazards to be evaluated.

A - CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPOSITION OF THE MATTER

- 1 Total amount and average composition of matter [to be] dumped (e.g. per year).
 - 2 Form, e.g. solid, sludge, liquid, or gaseous.
 - 3 Properties: physical (e.g. solubility and density), chemical and biochemical (e.g. oxygen demand, nutrients) and biological (e.g. presence of viruses, bacteria, yeasts, parasites).
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Interpretation:

In order to assess environmental transport and fate, including potential effects on water quality and biota, the total amount of wastes proposed to be dumped within a time period, and the physical, chemical and biological composition of the waste should be known. The first step for the characterization of a waste or other matter proposed for dumping at a site should be the collection of existing data on the waste composition or a waste analysis.

This should not mean that every waste should be subjected to exhaustive chemical analysis to establish the concentrations of a standard wide-ranging list of chemical elements or compounds. Knowledge of the raw materials and production processes used may often provide a key to the probable composition of the waste. A selective analysis may then be sufficient for a preliminary assessment. As a minimum, it should be established whether any Annex I or Annex II materials are present.

The analysis should include appropriate measurements of the composition of major components. In cases where anthropogenic chemicals of high toxicity are known or suspected to be involved, those minor components which are reasonably identifiable should be measured.

In addition data should, as appropriate, be obtained on physical, chemical and biological properties of the waste or other matter, such as:

- Solubility
- Percent solids
- Density (specific gravity) of bulk matter, its liquid and particle phases
- Grain size fractions of total solid phase (e.g. clay-silt/sand-gravel fractions of dredged material)
- pH
- Biochemical oxygen demand (BOD)
- Chemical oxygen demand (COD)
- Nutrients
- Microbiological components.

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- 4 Toxicity,
 - 5 Persistence: physical, chemical and biological,
 - 6 Accumulation and biotransformation in biological materials or sediments.
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Interpretation:

If the chemical analysis of the wastes shows the presence of substances whose biological effects are not well known, or if there is any doubt as to the exact composition or properties of the waste, it may be necessary to carry out suitable test procedures for toxicity, persistence, bioavailability and bioaccumulation, which may include the following:

- 1 acute toxicity tests on phytoplankton, crustaceans or molluscs, fish, or other such organisms as may be appropriate;
- 2 chronic toxicity tests capable of evaluating long-term sublethal effects, such as bioassays covering an entire life cycle;
- 3 tests to determine the potential for bioavailability and bioaccumulation of the substances contained in the waste and, if appropriate, the potential for eventual elimination. The test organisms should be those most likely to bioaccumulate the substances concerned; and
- 4 test for determining the persistence of substances contained in the waste. The potential for degradability of these substances should be determined using bacteria and water typical of the proposed dumping site. The tests should attempt to reflect the conditions at the proposed dumping site.

If appropriate, the test procedures described above should be carried out separately with the solid, suspended and/or liquid phases of wastes proposed for sea disposal.

A number of substances, when entering the marine environment, are known to be altered by biological processes to more toxic substances. This should be taken into particular account when the various tests mentioned above are performed.

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- 7 Susceptibility to physical, chemical and biochemical changes and interaction in the aquatic environment with other dissolved organic and inorganic materials
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Interpretation:

Substances introduced into the sea may be rapidly rendered harmless by physical, chemical and biochemical processes but others may be changed to products with more hazardous properties than those of the original substances. In these latter cases, it may be appropriate to carry out the tests outlined in paragraph A6 above with the anticipated products.

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- 8 Probability of production of taints or other changes reducing marketability of resources (fish, shellfish, etc.).
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Interpretation:

In evaluating the possible effects of the waste concerned on marine biota, particular attention should be paid to those substances which are known to accumulate in marine organisms with the result that seafood is tainted and rendered unpalatable. In many cases there might be a suspicion about the tainting property of a substance without the availability of firm data. In these cases a taste panel will have to determine threshold limits, if any, of the tainting properties of the substance concerned.

"Other changes reducing the marketability of resources" referred to in paragraph 8 of Section A include discolouration of fish flesh, and fish diseases such as fin rot and tumours.

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- 9 In issuing a permit for dumping, Contracting Parties should consider whether an adequate scientific basis exists concerning characteristics and composition of the matter to be dumped to assess the impact of the matter to marine life and to human health.*
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Interpretation:

In considering disposal at sea of ill-defined wastes or waste mixtures from multiple sources, every effort should be made to obtain data on their chemical, physical and biological characteristics to assess their environmental transport, fate and effects. If a waste is so poorly characterized that proper assessment (using the foregoing guidelines) cannot be made of its potential impacts in the environment, then that waste should not be dumped at sea.

B - CHARACTERISTICS OF DUMPING SITE AND METHOD OF DEPOSIT

Matters relating to dumpsite selection criteria are addressed in greater detail in a study prepared by GESAMP* (Reports and Studies No.16: Scientific Criteria for the Selection of Waste Disposal Sites at Sea, IMO 1982) which should be considered in conjunction with these guidelines.

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- 1 Location (e.g. co-ordinates of the dumping area, depth and distance from the coast), location in relation to other areas (e.g. amenity areas, spawning, nursery and fishing areas and exploitable resources).
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Interpretation:

Basic site characterization information to be considered by national authorities at a very early stage of assessment of a new site should include

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- * The inclusion of paragraph 9 in section A of Annex III has been approved in principle and the Twelfth Consultative Meeting has been designated for its formal adoption.
- ** IMO/FAO/UNESCO/WMO/WHO/IAEA/UN/UNEP Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution.

the co-ordinates of the dumping area (latitude, longitude), as well as its location with regard to:

- distance to nearest coastline
- recreational areas
- spawning and nursery areas
- known migration routes of fish or marine mammals
- sport and commercial fishing areas
- areas of natural beauty or significant cultural or historical importance
- areas of special scientific or biological importance (marine sanctuaries)
- shipping lanes
- military exclusion zones
- engineering uses of seafloor (e.g. potential or ongoing seabed mining, undersea cables, desalination or energy conversion sites).

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- 2 Rate of disposal per specific period (e.g. quantity per day, per week, per month).
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Interpretation:

Although the amounts of matter to be dumped (e.g. per year) are considered under paragraph A1 above, many operations, e.g. those related to dredging, are of shorter periods. In order to assess the capacity of the area for receiving a given type of material the anticipated loading rates (e.g. per day) or in the case of existing sites, the actual loading rates (frequency of operations and quantities of wastes or other matter disposed of at each operation per time period) should be taken into consideration.

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- 3 Methods of packaging and containment, if any.
 - 4 Initial dilution achieved by proposed method of release.
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Interpretation:

The data to be considered under this item should include information on:

- type, size and form of packaging and containment units
- presence of any Annex I or Annex II substances as packaging material or in any matrix that might be used
- marking and labelling of packages
- disposal method (e.g. jettisoning over ship's side; discharge of liquids and sludges through pipes, pumping rates, number and location of discharge pipe outlets (under or above waterline, water depth), etc.). In this connexion the length and speed of the vessel when discharging wastes or other matter should be used to establish the initial dilution.

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- 5 Dispersal characteristics (e.g. effects of currents, tides and wind on horizontal transport and vertical mixing).
 - 6 Water characteristics (e.g. temperature, pH, salinity, stratification, oxygen indices of pollution – dissolved oxygen (DO), chemical oxygen demand (COD), biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) – nitrogen present in organic and mineral form including ammonia, suspended matter, other nutrients and productivity).
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Interpretation:

For the evaluation of dispersal characteristics data should be obtained on the following:

- water depths (maximum, minimum, mean)
- water stratification in various seasons and weather conditions (depth and seasonal variation of pycnocline)

- tidal period, orientation of tidal ellipse, velocities of minor and major axis
- mean surface drift (net): direction, velocity
- mean bottom drift (net): direction, velocity
- storm (wave) induced bottom currents (velocities)
- wind and wave characteristics, average number of storm days per year
- concentration and composition of suspended solids.

Where the chemical composition of the waste warrants, it may be appropriate to evaluate pH, suspended solids, persistent organic chemicals, metals, nutrients and microbiological components. BOD and COD or organic carbon determinations in the suspended or dissolved phase, together with oxygen measurements, may also be appropriate where organic wastes or nutrients are concerned.

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- 7 Bottom characteristics (e.g. topography, geochemical and geological characteristics and biological productivity).
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Interpretation:

Maps and bathymetric charts should be consulted and specific topographic features which may affect the dispersal of wastes (e.g. marine canyons) should be identified.

The geochemical observations of sediments in and around the disposal site should be related to the type of waste(s) involved. The range of chemical constituents should be the same as that provided for the characterization of the waste or other matter, with the minimum range of data set out in paragraph A1 above.

In areas where wastes may reach the bottom, sediment structure (i.e. the distribution of gravel, sand, silt and clay) as well as benthic and epibenthic community characteristics should be considered for the site area.

Mobility of sediments due to waves, tides or other currents should be considered in any waste disposal site assessments. The possibility of seismic activities in the area under consideration should be investigated, in particular when hazardous wastes in packaged form are concerned. The distribution of sediment types in an area provides basic information as to whether dumped solids with certain characteristics will accumulate at a site or be dispersed.

Sorption/desorption processes under the range of dump site redox and pH conditions, with particular reference to exchanges between dissolved and fine particulate phases, are relevant to the evaluation of the accumulative properties of the area for the components of the waste proposed for dumping and for their potential release to overlying waters.

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- 8 Existence and effects of other dumpings which have been made in the dumping area (e.g. heavy metal background reading and organic carbon content).
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Interpretation:

The basic assessment to be carried out of a site, either a new or an existing one, shall include the consideration of possible effects that might arise by the increase of certain waste constituents or by interaction (e.g. synergistic effects) with other substances introduced in the area, either by other dumpings or by river input and discharges from coastal areas, by exploitation areas, and maritime transport as well as through the atmosphere. The existing stress on biological communities as a result of such activities should be evaluated before any new or additional disposal operations are established. The possible future uses of the sea area should be kept under consideration.

Information from baseline and monitoring studies at already established dumping sites will be important in this evaluation of any new dumping activity at the same site or nearby.

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- 9 In issuing a permit for dumping, Contracting Parties should consider whether an adequate scientific basis exists for assessing the consequences of such dumping, as outlined in this Annex, taking into account seasonal variations.
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Interpretation:

When a given location is first under consideration as a candidate disposal site, the existing data basis should be evaluated with a view to establishing whether the main characteristics are known in sufficient detail or accurately enough for reliable modelling of waste effects. Many parameters are so variable in space and time that a comprehensive series of observation have to be designed to quantify the key properties of an area over the various seasons.

If at any time, monitoring studies demonstrate that existing disposal sites do not satisfy these criteria, alternative disposal sites or methods should be considered.

C - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONDITIONS

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- 1 Possible effects on amenities (e.g. presence of floating or stranded material, turbidity, objectionable odour, discolouration and foaming).
- 2 Possible effects on marine life, fish and shell fish culture, fish stocks and fisheries, seaweed harvesting and culture.
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Interpretation:

Particular attention should be given to those waste constituents which float on the surface or which, in reaction with sea water may lead to floating substances and which, because they are confined to a two-dimensional rather than a three-dimensional medium, disperse very slowly. The possibility of reaccumulation of such substances caused by the presence of surface

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convergences which may lead to interferences with amenities as well as with fisheries and shipping should be investigated.

Information on the nature and extent of commercial and recreational fishery resources and activities should be gathered.

Body burdens of persistent toxic substances (and, in the case of shellfish, pathogens) in selected marine life and, in particular, commercial food species from the dumping area should be established.

Certain grounds although not in use for fishing may be important to fish stocks as spawning, nursery or feeding areas, and the effects of sea disposal on these grounds should be considered.

The effects which waste disposal in certain areas could have on the habitats of rare, vulnerable or endangered species should be recognized.

Besides toxicological and bioaccumulation effects of waste constituents other potential impacts on marine life, such as nutrient enrichment, oxygen depletion, turbidity, modification of the sediment composition and blanketing of the sea floor, should be addressed.

It should also be taken into account that disposal at sea of certain substances may disrupt the physiological processes used by fish for detection and may mask natural characteristics of sea water or tributary streams, thus confusing migratory species which consequently lose their direction, go unspawned or fail to find food.

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- 3 Possible effects on other uses of the sea (e.g. impairment of water quality for industrial use, underwater corrosion of structures, interference with ship operations from floating materials, interference with fishing or navigation through deposit of waste or solid objects on the sea floor and protection of areas of special importance for scientific or conservation purposes).
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Interpretation:

Consideration of possible effects on the uses of the sea as outlined in paragraph C3 should include interferences with fishing, such as the damaging or fouling of fishing gear. Any possibility of excluding the future uses of the sea dumping area for other resources, such as water use for industrial purposes, navigation, erection of structures, mining, etc., should be taken fully into account.

Areas of special importance include those of interest for scientific research or conservation areas and distinctive habitats of limited distribution (such as seabird rookeries, kelp beds or coral reefs); information should also be provided on all distinctive habitats in the vicinity of the proposed site which might be affected by the material to be dumped. Attention should also be given to geological and physiographical formations of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

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- 4 The practical availability of alternative land-based methods of treatment, disposal or elimination, or of treatment to render the matter less harmful for dumping at sea.
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Interpretation:

1 Dumping of wastes and other matter at sea

Before considering the dumping of matter at sea every effort should be made to determine the practical availability of alternative land-based methods of treatment, disposal or elimination, or of treatment to render the matter less harmful for dumping at sea.

The practical availability of other means of disposal should be considered in the light of a comparative assessment of:

- Human health risks
- Environmental costs
- Hazards (including accidents) associated with treatment, packaging, transport and disposal
- Economics (including energy costs)
- Exclusion of future uses of disposal areas,

for both sea disposal and the alternatives.

If the foregoing analysis shows the ocean alternative to be less preferable, a licence for sea disposal should not be given.

2 Incineration of wastes and other matter at sea

Recognizing the provisions of Regulation 2(2) of the Regulations for the Control of Incineration of Wastes and Other Matter at Sea, the appropriate

authorities should ensure that, before considering the incineration of wastes at sea, every effort has been made to determine the practical availability of alternative land-based methods of treatment, disposal or elimination of the wastes concerned.

Accordingly, authorities should take appropriate steps to ensure that the generators of those wastes that are proposed for incineration at sea have applied the generally accepted hierarchy of waste management in their assessment of alternative technologies.

The hierarchy is described as follows:

Existing and developing methods for managing hazardous wastes are commonly organized into a hierarchy that accords preferred status to methods that reduce risk by reducing the quantity and degree of hazard of a waste.

The highest tier in the hierarchy includes those methods – collectively referred to as reduction – that actually avoid the generation of waste. Techniques that reuse or recover wastes after they are generated occupy the next tier. Techniques that treat or destroy wastes are preferred over those that merely contain or actually disperse wastes into the environment.

Specific technological approaches which have been shown to achieve significant reductions in the amounts of hazardous waste include process and equipment changes, chemical substitution, product reformulation, as well as a variety of maintenance, operational and housekeeping changes as well as waste reuse.

It should, however, be recognized that some countries producing wastes that need to be destroyed by incineration, either do not possess suitable land-based incinerators or have limited capacity at such facilities. Furthermore, export of wastes to land-based incinerators in other countries

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may be restricted by legal, economic or other factors including available capacities and national priorities. These circumstances may, in certain cases, constitute grounds for concluding that practical alternatives to incineration at sea are not available. Nevertheless, permits for incineration at sea should not be issued unless conformity with the Regulations for the Control of Incineration of Wastes and Other Matter at Sea, and the Technical Guidelines thereto, can be assured.

In applying the hierarchy of waste management, alternatives to incineration of wastes at sea should also be considered in the light of comparative assessment of:

- Human health risks;
- Environmental costs;
- Hazards (including accidents) associated with treatment, packaging, transport and disposal;
- Economics (including energy costs);
- Exclusion of future uses of incineration sites

for both incineration at sea and the alternatives.

If the foregoing analysis shows the ocean alternative to be less preferable, a licence for incineration at sea should not be given.

Where it is determined that alternatives to incineration at sea are, in practice, not available, emphasis should be placed on the introduction of improved waste management procedures with particular attention being given to the application of the hierarchy of waste management described above. If it is predicted that, despite the application of waste management procedures, arisings of wastes requiring incineration are likely to be maintained, or to increase significantly, consideration should be given to establishing suitable land-based alternatives, or increasing their capacity, to meet national requirements.

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