Sjøfartsdirektoratet
Norwegian Maritime Authority

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Regulation concerning amendments to the Regulations on ballast water management on ships and mobile offshore units – electronic record books

Introduction

The Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA) has adopted amendments to the Regulations of 8 September 2017 No. 1368 on ballast water management on ships and mobile offshore units, following the changes to the Ballast Water Management Convention regarding the use of electronic record books. The amended Regulations will take effect on 1 October 2025.

On 22 March 2024, the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) adopted amendments to the Ballast Water Management Convention through Resolution MEPC.383(81). This resolution introduces a new regulation, A-1/9, which defines the term electronic record book. At the same meeting, amendments were also made to Regulation B/2-1, requiring that any electronic ballast water record book system must be approved by the Administration in accordance with the guidelines set out in Resolution MEPC.372(80). Additionally, Regulation B-2/5 was amended to clarify that a group of electronic entries in the ballast water record book must be approved by the ship's master within reasonable time.

In Norway, the approval of electronic record book systems for ballast water is delegated to recognised organisations with which Norway has agreements, pursuant to section 41, second paragraph of the Ship Safety and Security Act.

The consultation

The proposed amendment to the Regulations ballast water management on ships and mobile offshore units was circulated for review from 4 July to 1 September 2025.

The NMA received consultation responses from the Norwegian Union of Marine Engineers and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, both stating that they had no comments on the proposal. Responses were also received from the Norwegian Fishermen's Association and Fiskebåt.

The Norwegian Fishermen's Association suggested that the NMA should extend the implementation deadline by six months to allow industry stakeholder sufficient time to adapt.

Fiskebåt noted that the consultation was issued with a short deadline due to the changes being a result of amendments to international regulations adopted by the IMO. The intention is for all member states to follow the same regulations from the same date, which is why the NMA believes the consultation period must be shortened. Nevertheless, Fiskebåt argued that the deadline of 1 October is too tight. They requested flexibility in adapting existing electronic ballast water record books to comply with IMO guidelines.

The NMA's comments on the consultation responses

The NMA considers the amendments to be largely uncontroversial, and both the NMA and the industry have been involved throughout the process leading up to the adoption of the changes. Norway developed positions

in collaboration with the industry and participated in the negotiations on the regulations at the IMO. Therefore, the industry is assumed to be well informed about the changes through their special interest organisations and information provided by the NMA.

To ensure a smooth transition for the affected shipping companies, the recognised organisations have also been delegated the authority to approve electronic record book systems in accordance with the new regulations before they enter into force.

Based on the above considerations, the Norwegian Maritime Authority believes that a shortened consultation period is justified.

On the amendments to the Regulations on ballast water management on ships and mobile offshore units
As of today, it is permitted to use either a traditional logbook or an electronic record book for recording ballast water operations, as stated in the wording of Resolution MEPC.383(81): "Each ship shall have on board a ballast water record book, which may be an electronic record book", see the word "may".

The amendment to regulation A-1/9 introduces a definition of the term electronic record book. Regulation A-1/9 has been incorporated into Norwegian law through transformation in section 8 of the Regulations on ballast water management. The definition of electronic record book in the new regulation A-1/9 of the Ballast Water Management Convention is nearly identical to the definition used in MARPOL Annexes I, II, V, and VI, as adopted by Resolution MEPC.314(74).

In addition, amendments have been made to regulations B-2/1 and B-2/5. An addition to paragraph 1 states that electronic ballast water record book systems must be approved by the Administration, and that the guidelines developed by the Organization shall be taken into account. An addition to paragraph 5, concerning the keeping of the ballast water record book, states that if a group of electronic entries is involved, these must be verified by the ship's master in a timely manner.

These amendments mean that, from 1 October 2025, electronic ballast water record book systems must be approved by the Administration. The approval shall be based on the guidelines provided in Resolution MEPC.372(80). According to these guidelines, ships with an approved electronic record book system should also carry written confirmation of this approval from the Administration.

Administrative and financial implications

Consequences for the industry and bodies concerned
The amendments are an extension of the existing requirement to maintain a ballast water record book. In a broader context, the NMA believes that the changes will support the goal of more efficient ship operations.

The new requirement in regulation B-2 stipulates that an electronic record book system must be in place. In addition, a ship-specific declaration must be available on board confirming that the installation of the electronic record book system complies with IMO guidelines. This may result in increased costs for the industry.

Consequences for the authorities
The NMA has delegated the approval of electronic record book systems to recognised organisations, and the amendment will therefore have limited impact on the NMA itself.

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This document has been electronically approved and therefore does not contain handwritten signatures.

Attachments:
Regulatory amendments
Resolution MEPC.383(81)