



Vessel Compliance Scheme (VCS) for Commercial Maritime Vessels

Understand and consistently follow these rules to achieve better biosecurity compliance

JULY 2016

Qualifying for the VCS

Commercial vessel operators must meet the following requirements to be eligible for the VCS and qualify for reduced intervention:

- a minimum of 3 voyages to Australia in a 12 month period
- below the individual inspection threshold of 10 points for a voyage
- below the collective threshold of 20 points over 3 voyages.

Once on the scheme, vessels will receive reduced physical inspections over a defined voyage cycle.

How the VCS works

The demerit action list below and associated points determines vessel eligibility for the VCS.

During an inspection demerit actions may be accrued. For each negative finding, demerit points will be applied. To stay on the scheme, a vessel must stay under the identified point thresholds.

The application of a demerit action does not replace any other enforcement actions available to the department under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. A master or agent that commits an offence may be liable to penalties in addition to VCS demerits.

Reporting			Sanitation			Documentation			Directions				
Demerit Action	Demerit Points	How You Can Comply	Demerit Action	Demerit Points	How You Can Comply	Demerit Action	Demerit Points	How You Can Comply	Demerit Action	Demerit Points	How You Can Comply		
Failure to report illness on board	10	Report all instances of illness on board (crew and passengers), as part of pre-arrival reporting. Submit updated reports for any changes to illness on board during the voyage in Australia	Inadequate storage of waste —minor	3	Secure all waste on board in designated areas and waste bins. Waste should not be left unsecured, open and accessible to insects, animals and birds. The severity of any waste related issue will be determined by a biosecurity officer during the inspection, and may incur between 3 and 10 demerit points	Failure to present medical log	1	Maintain all medical logs on board and keep updated at all times	Failure to follow directions on the Biosecurity Status Document (BSD)	10	Follow all directions contained in the latest version of the BSD		
Failure to update illness report	10		Inadequate storage of waste —major	7		Inadequate storage of waste —critical	10	Failure to present Biosecurity Status Document (BSD)	4	The latest version of the BSD must be made available to a biosecurity officer on request	Failure to follow conditions on the Ship Sanitation Control Certificate	10	Follow all directions contained in the latest version of the Ship Sanitation Control Certificate
Failure to notify the department of medivac as a result of illness	10		Cruise vessel failing to report percentage of cases of gastro-intestinal illness on board	8		Infestation of insects found on board - minor	3	Failure to present Ship Sanitation Certificate	10	The latest version of the Ship Sanitation Certificate as declared must be made available to a biosecurity officer on request	Declared ship's pet/animal not managed as directed	10	Follow all directions for declared pets or animals on board
Failure to report death on board	10	Report all deaths on board	Infestation of insects found on board - major	6	Inspect galleys, superstructures, food storage, deck and cargo areas for any insect activity as part of pre-arrival reporting. Submit updated reports for any changes or evidence of insect activity during the voyage in Australia. The severity of any insect related issue will be determined by a biosecurity officer during the inspection, and may incur between 3 and 10 demerit points	Failure to present Freedom from AGM Certificate	10	The latest version of the Freedom from AGM Certificate as declared must be made available to a biosecurity officer on request	Incorrect discharge of waste	10	Manage biosecurity waste in accordance with department requirements. Biosecurity waste must be collected, transported and disposed of under an Approved Arrangement or under the supervision of a biosecurity officer		
Failure to declare a ship's pet/animal	10	Declare all ships pets and animals (dead or alive) on board including birds and reptiles as part of pre-arrival reporting	Infestation of insects found on board - critical	10		Evidence of rodent infestation — minor	3	Maintain good hygiene and sanitation in areas that are likely to attract rodents, for example waste storage, food preparation and storage areas. The severity of any sanitation related issues will be determined by a biosecurity officer during the inspection, and may incur between 3 and 6 demerit points	Plants not kept in accordance with the Biosecurity Status Document (BSD)	7	Follow all directions contained in the latest version of the BSD including any specific conditions for plants on board		
Undeclared deceased animal/s found on board	6	Keep a look out for hitchhiker pests. Report any insects or animals (not a pet) on the vessel during the voyage in Australia	Evidence of rodent infestation — major	5		Evidence of rodent infestation — critical	10		Failure to present approved and valid ballast water documentation	8	Ensure the vessel has a ballast water record system and a valid ballast water certificate available to a biosecurity officer on request	Unauthorised discharge of ballast water	10
Undeclared hitchhiker animal	10		Declare all live plants and soil on board as part of pre-arrival reporting or provide the information when sought by a biosecurity officer during the inspection	Spillage of food material presenting sanitation risk — minor	3	Evidence of seeds, meal or organic material on deck — light contamination	2		Failure to demonstrate indications of competence in using and maintaining the treatment system as specified in the Ballast Water Management Plan	7	Demonstrate that the vessel ballast water treatment system has been operated in accordance with the Ballast Water Management Plan and manufacturer's instructions. Demonstrate that the responsible vessel officer/s are competent with the operation of the system to a biosecurity officer on request		
Failure to report plants on board	3	Accurately report ballast water information in all ballast water reports during a voyage. The severity of any incorrect ballast water reporting issue will be determined by a biosecurity officer during the inspection, and may incur between 2 and 10 demerit points	Spillage of food material presenting sanitation risk — major	6	Maintain good hygiene and sanitation on the vessel and have a system to regularly manage spillage of food material in areas such as galleys, food preparation and waste storage areas. The severity of any sanitation related issues will be determined by a biosecurity officer during the inspection, and may incur between 3 and 6 demerit points	Failure to report crew changes	7	Report crew disembarking the vessel and not returning to the vessel on its current voyage in Australian waters. Submit updated reports for any changes to crew movements during the voyage in Australia by lodging a service request	Evidence of seeds, meal or organic material on deck — moderate contamination	5	Maintain good hygiene and sanitation on the vessel and have a system to regularly manage spillage of seeds, meal or other organic material that could attract insects, rodents, birds or other animals. The severity of any sanitation related issues will be determined by a biosecurity officer during the inspection, and may incur between 2 and 10 demerit points		
Incorrect reporting on Ballast Water Report — minor	2		Seek prior approval to enter a non-first point of entry. Submit an application to enter a non-first point prior to arrival at a non-first point of entry	Evidence of seeds, meal or organic material on deck — heavy contamination		10	Mosquito risk — low	1	Eliminate any breeding sites for mosquitos and larvae. Monitor for any water accumulation in either vessel structures or other receptacles which could harbour adult mosquitoes and larvae. Avoid placing receptacles such as buckets, tyres and drums in the open. The severity of issues relating to any mosquito risks will be determined by a biosecurity officer during the inspection, and may incur between 1 and 10 demerit points	Evidence of seeds, meal or organic material on deck - heavy contamination		10	
Incorrect reporting on Ballast Water Report — major	7		Submit pre-arrival reporting information 96-12 hours prior to arrival at an Australian port or anchorage	Failure to submit a Pre-Arrival Report prior to arrival at port or anchorage		10	Mosquito risk — medium	4		Thoroughly clean and treat livestock decks in accordance with department requirements. Fodder must be appropriately contained and stored securely. The severity of any livestock sanitation related issue will be determined by a biosecurity officer during the inspection, and may incur between 4 and 10 demerit points		Mosquito risk — high	10
Incorrect reporting on Ballast Water Report — critical	10	Accurately declare biosecurity risk material including personal effects and food that crew members are taking off vessels, prior to departing the vessel. If unsure, contact a biosecurity officer		Failure to report the previous carrying of high risk cargo on the Pre-Arrival Report	3	Failure to clean decks that result in minor issues	4						
Entry to a non-first point of entry without prior approval	10	Accurately respond to questions in pre-arrival reporting including information on identified high risk cargo that the vessel may have carried as part of previous voyages	Failure to report crew changes	7	Failure to clean decks that result in significant issues	10							
Submission of a Pre-Arrival Report less than 12 hours from arrival at port or anchorage	8	Accurately declare biosecurity risk material including personal effects and food that crew members are taking off vessels, prior to departing the vessel. If unsure, contact a biosecurity officer	Failure to report crew changes	7									
Failure to submit a Pre-Arrival Report prior to arrival at port or anchorage	10		Report crew disembarking the vessel and not returning to the vessel on its current voyage in Australian waters. Submit updated reports for any changes to crew movements during the voyage in Australia by lodging a service request										
Failure to report the previous carrying of high risk cargo on the Pre-Arrival Report	3												
Failure to report crew changes	7												
Undeclared biosecurity risk material from crew leaving the vessel	2												

Any changes in circumstances must be reported to the department as soon as practicable.

The VCS is just one tool to help vessel operators comply with Australia's biosecurity requirements. More information about VCS can be found at: agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/avm/vessels/

