



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture
and Water Resources

The Maritime Arrivals Reporting System (MARS) and what it means for you

Biosecurity

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The Maritime Arrivals Reporting System (MARS) and what it means for you

Using MARS

MARS is an online portal for commercial vessel masters and shipping agents to submit pre-arrival documents required of all international vessels seeking Australian biosecurity clearance. The system is a secure environment that is accessible only through registration. Once you have registered, you can:

- Submit information such as Pre-Arrival (PAR) and Ballast Water Reports
- View the biosecurity status of a vessel
- Request services such as waste removal, sanitation certification and coastal strip
- View directions and certificates issued by the department along with compliance outcomes
- See a summary of charges.

Reporting obligations

Pre-arrival information, and changes, for maritime conveyances (vessels) must be reported in a form approved by the Director of Biosecurity, which is MARS. Electronic offline forms can be used where there is limited connectivity, but they do not constitute the approved form. Your reporting obligations are met once your information has been submitted in MARS.

Vessel Operator Responsibilities: The operator of the vessel is obligated to accurately report information in accordance with section 193 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. This information must be lodged in MARS no later than 12 hours prior to arrival.

Shipping Agent Responsibilities: Where the vessel operator uses a shipping agent, the agent is responsible for lodgement of accurate and timely information into MARS. The agent must ensure that this information is a true and correct representation of the reports provided by the vessel operator, and that any changes have been confirmed with the operator.

Any changes in circumstances during the voyage in Australian waters must be reported to the department as soon as practicable.

Options to access MARS

Agents and masters can work out the option that suits their business operations best in order to meet biosecurity reporting obligations, as noted below.

1. **Masters with internet access** submit pre-arrival information using the MARS online web portal.
2. **Masters with email but no internet access** complete an offline form that has been provided by an agent and then email the xml data file back to the agent. The agent then loads this data file into MARS.
3. **Masters with no email or no internet access** complete the faxed forms provided to them by an agent and return them to the agent by fax. The agent then manually enters this data into MARS.



Operating systems and browsers for MARS

You do not need any special hardware or software to use MARS. The system is optimised for the following browsers:

Browser	Versions
Firefox	10+
Internet Explorer	9, 10, 11
Chrome	15+
Chrome (Android)	18+
Safari and Safari (iOS)	5+
Microsoft Edge	20.10240.0.0+

Registering to use MARS

To use MARS a one-off registration process is required. MARS can be accessed by a number of different role-based users including vessel masters/officers and shipping agencies. Registration is a simple two-step process

1. Signing onto the department's customer web portal at online.agriculture.gov.au/selfservice
2. Registering for access to MARS.

The voyage

In MARS, the voyage number is the unique identifier.

- It is important that you use the correct voyage number, as MARS uses this to link information such as the PAR, ballast water and Non-First Point of Entry reports.
- MARS only accepts alphanumeric characters (letters A–Z and numbers 0–9).



How we will communicate with you

As a client, you will now have a single source of information for biosecurity directions and advice for each voyage. This is the Biosecurity Status Document (BSD).

The BSD is auto generated in MARS and is version controlled to reflect any reported changes to directions or status occurring during a voyage. It uses a traffic light system as a visual cue to alert the user regarding the vessel status and any associated directions or advice issued by the department.

An illustrated version of a BSD can be viewed on the adjacent page.

What our clients have said about MARS



'The BSD is clear and well understood and contains all the information needed.'

Capt. Costel Mircea, Master MV JPO TAURUS



'After the successful Ballast Water Report submission, I received the BSD which I found very transparent and meritorious.'

Capt. Stanislaw Mizgier, Master MV HS Beethoven



Biosecurity Status Document (BSD)

Vessel Name: BLUESTAR

Call Sign: C4PA2

IMO Number: 9317389

Voyage Number: TEST1795

Document Version: 2

Issued on: 27/06/2016 9:28:48 AM (Canberra Time)

Details

The following information provides the status of this voyage as of the date noted above. Where changes occur, a revised version of this document will be provided. Directions outlined in this document include directions issued under a specific section of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and guidance on how to comply with the department's requirements.

Berthing Conditions in Australian First Points of Entry

The vessel has met its reporting requirements and is eligible to berth in Australian first points of entry. The operator of the vessel must, as soon as practical, notify a biosecurity officer if information in the pre-arrival report is incomplete or incorrect.

Berthing Conditions in Australian Non First Points of Entry Ports

The department has not received an application for the vessel to moor at a Non-First Point of Entry port. This vessel does not currently have permission to moor at a port that is not a first point of entry.

It is an offence for a vessel subject to biosecurity control to moor at a port in Australian territory that is not a first point of entry, unless the Director of Biosecurity (or delegate) has given permission.

Vessel Biosecurity

All plants should be kept inside and away from open doors and with windows closed. Unless authorised to do so, all plants should be kept inside the vessel while the vessel is in port and remain on board the vessel in Australian territory. **No plant/foodstuff/goods on the vessel (excluding goods carried as cargo) may be removed without the approval/direction of a departmental officer until it has left Australian territory after the last port of call. Galley grinders, overboard waste discharge chutes and swing bins must not be used in Australian ports or waters.**

Masters must advise the department of any crew departing or waste being discharged from the vessel to a provider that does not have an approved arrangement.

Report any insects or animals, including rodents found on board the vessel during the voyage to the department. Refer to the Biosecurity Checklist for Vessel Masters and information on the vessel compliance scheme to ensure compliance with the department's requirements.

Vessel Pratique and Ship Sanitation

Pratique is granted to the BLUESTAR for all ports in Australia. The Quarantine Signal (letter Q in the International Code of Signals) is not required to be displayed.

The vessel's Master or Agent must notify the department as soon as practicable if any individuals on board have signs or symptoms of a listed human disease during the current Australian voyage.

Ballast Status

A Ballast Water Report has not been submitted for this vessel.

A Ballast Water Report is highly recommended for all voyages in Australia and is required where the vessel discharges or intends to discharge ballast water in Australian territory. If the vessel intends to discharge ballast in Australian waters, a Ballast Water Report must be submitted in accordance with the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Note: This BSD is an abridged version for illustration purposes.

Enhanced client experience

MARS users can maintain a profile which is pre-populated with information during each subsequent voyage to Australia.

MARS and the offline forms are designed to be intuitive, reducing the scope for errors.

You can search MARS by vessel and view the status of reports (like PAR or ballast water). You can also lodge service requests at the same time, reducing the need to contact the department.



'I'm impressed with the physical appearance of the system, it is very well laid out on the screen which makes it very user friendly. It appears to be a very well thought out and constructed system.'

Julie Elverd, Wilhelmsen Ships Service Pty Ltd

Billing and invoicing

MARS will provide accurate and timely billing, and also provide the ability to make changes throughout a voyage.

For each voyage, masters or their nominated agents can assign up to three agents: a port agent, a billing agent and a crew agent.

MARS billing features:

- There is a single invoice per visit, per port
- The vessel operator or agent supplies the billing information during the lodgment of pre-arrival information and/or a service request
- Users can view a summary of invoices, including charges and payment status for each invoice
- Invoices are triggered within 24 hours of a vessel departing from a port
- The choice of specific agency setup structure can be tailored, depending on your individual business needs.



'Having billing information more readily available will be a huge bonus. Invoicing has been an ongoing issue for years so this ties all activities together and invoices are available in a more timely manner.'

Brisbane-based Shipping Agent



'Two of the best things about MARS is the ability to view compliance based on uploaded reports, as well as invoicing totals.'

Agent, Inchcape Shipping Services

What to expect during an inspection

Biosecurity officers in the field use mobile devices to conduct inspections and record outcomes.

As MARS is a paperless system, all directions and relevant documents such as pratique and ship sanitation certificates are issued electronically. These documents are emailed to the nominated agent or vessel master. Once an assessment or inspection activity is finalised, an updated BSD will generally be emailed within minutes.

During the inspection, biosecurity officers will request that a master demonstrate that they have followed the directions contained in the latest version of the BSD.



Vessel Compliance Scheme (VCS)

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

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

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

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 point thresholds listed above.

Additional guidance material will be published by the department to assist vessel operators comply with Australia's biosecurity requirements.



'This is a welcomed development as the new scheme is designed to facilitate better biosecurity compliance by vessel operators, and it is much easier to understand. Rules and regulations are designed to influence behaviour, and by the department making the rules transparent, simple and easy to follow, it will ensure more vessel operators stand a much better chance of understanding their biosecurity obligations and doing the right thing. This will mean better compliance resulting in reduced intervention and faster clearances – saving time and money.'

Rod Nairn AM, CEO, Shipping Australia Limited



Support tools

There are a range of support tools available to help you comply with Australia's biosecurity requirements:

- Australia's Biosecurity Checklist for Commercial Vessels
- Vessel Compliance Scheme (VCS) for Commercial Maritime Vessels poster
- MARS Quick Reference Guides and FAQs
- MARS User Guides
- Biosecurity Clearance of Vessels and MARS online eLearning
- Pest Alert! Do you have stowaways on board?

For more information about these support tools, refer to the department's website.

For more information about MARS and the VCS, contact the Maritime National Coordination Centre (MNCC), or your local biosecurity officer.





Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

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(free call in Australia and is in English)

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