



**Australian Government**

**Australian Quarantine  
and Inspection Service**

# **Operator Guidelines for Vessels less than 25 metres arriving in Australia**

**Version 1.1**



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## Disclaimer

- The requirements in this document are to be used as a guide only and are subject to change. It is the responsibility of the user to check that they have the latest version and to ensure compliance with the legislation. See [www.aqis.gov.au/shipping](http://www.aqis.gov.au/shipping) for the latest version.
- The requirements contained in this document are those of AQIS only and do not include the requirements of any other Australian Government agency.
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- In addition please refer to Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's (DAFF) general Disclaimer at <http://www.daff.gov.au/about/disclaimer>.

## Version Control

Updates will occur automatically on the [AQIS](http://www.aqis.gov.au) website and this page will summarise the amendments as they occur. The specific sections updated are described in the revision table below:

Version	Date	Author	Description of Change	Section
1.0	8/2/09	Riza Rontas	Development of Guidelines	Seaports Program
1.1	13/5/09	Riza Rontas	Regional Consultation	Seaports Program



## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to operators of vessels less than 25 metres intending to arrive in Australia. The information contained herein outlines the AQIS requirements for vessel clearances in accordance with Australian Government legislation, namely:

- [Quarantine Act 1908](#)
- [Quarantine Regulations 2000](#)
- [Quarantine Proclamation 1998](#)
- [Quarantine \(Christmas Island\) Proclamation 2004](#)
- [Quarantine \(Cocos Island\) Proclamation 2004](#)
- [Quarantine Service Fees Determination 2005](#)

AQIS is part of [DAFF](#) and plays an essential role in maintaining Australia's animal, plant and human health status.

Quarantine controls at Australia's borders are governed by the *Quarantine Act 1908*. These controls aim to minimise the risk associated with the introduction of exotic pests and diseases entering Australia and help protect our agriculture export industries as well as our environment, tourism industries and lifestyle.

AQIS administers human quarantine functions on behalf of the [Department of Health and Ageing \(DoHA\)](#) including the screening of arriving passengers for human quarantinable diseases, surveillance activities relating to Ship Sanitation Certification (SSC) and vector monitoring.

The AQIS Seaports Program is responsible for the quarantine clearance of all incoming overseas vessels, vessel waste, crew, passengers and their accompanied goods.

## 2. AQIS Contact Details

Please visit the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) website at [www.aqis.gov.au](http://www.aqis.gov.au) for further information or contact the AQIS Seaports Program's national or regional office. Alternatively, you can send an email to [seaports@aqis.gov.au](mailto:seaports@aqis.gov.au).

## 3. Approval for Vessel to Enter Australia

Section 20 of the *Quarantine Act 1908* requires overseas vessels to enter an Australian first port of entry. Permission to enter an alternative port can be requested from AQIS under section 20AA of the *Quarantine Act 1908*. To obtain an application form please visit [www.aqis.gov.au/shipping](http://www.aqis.gov.au/shipping).

Australian First Ports that have been proclaimed are listed in section 8 of the [Quarantine Proclamation 1998](#).



A Master of a vessel is guilty of an offence under the *Quarantine Act 1908* if they permit a vessel to be moored, anchored or otherwise secured anywhere other than a first port of entry, unless written permission is provided by AQIS.

## 4. Quarantine Pre-arrival Reporting Requirements

Under section 27A (2) of the *Quarantine Act 1908*, vessels which are less than 25 metres are required to report prescribed information to a Quarantine Officer (QO) 96 -12 hours before the estimated time of arrival at an Australian port. The Quarantine Pre Arrival Report (QPAR) for Vessels less than 25 metres provides important information to AQIS so that a quarantine risk assessment of the vessel can be made. The information can be provided verbally or in writing. If the information changes after it is given, an update of the changes must be provided again as soon as possible.\*

Prescribed information, listed in regulation 10 of the [Quarantine Regulations 2000](#) that a Master of a vessel must answer includes:

- vessel particulars such as name, identifiers, voyage-related details including the number of persons onboard;
- health questions highlighting illness and/or death of persons onboard the vessel; and
- details of any animals onboard.

\* Please note that failure to comply with a requirement to report under section 27A or giving false or misleading information is an offence under the Act. A Master of a vessel may also be asked by a QO to answer questions about the above prescribed matters.

## 5. Additional Reporting Requirements

Regulation 19 of the [Quarantine Regulations 2000](#) requires the Master of a vessel to provide AQIS with at least 48 hours notice of any proposed changes of moorings of the vessel, the estimated time of departure from the port and whether the port is the last port of call prior to departure from Australia.

Failure to comply with a requirement to report under regulation 19 or giving false or misleading information is an offence.

Please note, regulation 19 is required for surveillance only and if there is quarantine risks still remain on the vessel.



## 6. Human Health

The *Quarantine Act 1908* requires the Master of a vessel to immediately notify a QO if a person onboard displays a prescribed symptom;\* or a prescribed or infectious disease breaks out onboard the vessel prior to arrival and for the duration of time in Australian waters. The obligation also applies if the Master believes or suspects that a quarantinable disease has broken out or a quarantinable pest is onboard.

\* Prescribed symptoms are listed in regulation 6(1) of the [Quarantine Regulations 2000](#). Further information about prescribed symptoms is available on the AQIS website: '[Reporting an Illness: Important Quarantine Information for International Ship and Air Crew brochure](#)'. Please refer to the [DoHA](#) website to order copies of the brochure for your vessel.

Failure to comply with the requirement to report a prescribed symptom or disease is an offence.

## 7. Pratique

Pratique, in practice, is the permission granted by AQIS for a vessel arriving in Australia to disembark passengers, crew or cargo (noting that the vessel itself and some person or goods may continue to remain under Quarantine control).

A yellow flag must be flown upon entry until pratique is granted

Granting pratique includes providing the Master of the vessel with a formal certificate on an approved form at their first port of arrival. Under no circumstances are any persons permitted to neither leave nor board the vessel prior to pratique being granted.

If a request for pratique is refused, the Master of the vessel must fly the quarantine flag (yellow flag or quarantine lights if at night).

Failure by a Master of an overseas vessel to fulfil pratique requirements is a breach of the *Quarantine Act 1908*.

## 8. What to expect during inspection

Upon arrival in an Australian port a QO may board the vessel to review paperwork and perform a physical inspection of all accessible areas including a brief timber inspection.

### 8.1 Interview with the Master

The interview with the Master provides the QO with the opportunity to verify the health status of the vessel, people and animals (where applicable) onboard. The QO will also view all relevant documentation which includes verifying the information on the QPAR is correct. The interview with the Master provides an opportunity for verbal declaration on anything that may have changed.



## 8.2 Vessel Inspection

On arrival at a first port of entry the vessel may be subject to a physical inspection by a QO. The inspection may include:

- assessing the health of persons onboard
- inspection of timber components of the vessel and any history of damage or refits
- inspection of personal effects/articles
- confirmation of the management of any plants or animals onboard
- removal of all material that is identified as posing a potential quarantine risk
- removal of waste\* (refer to section 9 of this document)
- examination of galley and store rooms for signs of insect or rodent infestation
- assessing biofouling risks
- water collection/storage containers which may contain vectors
- anchors, chains and other ancillary gear which may have biofouling issues
- information regarding the stripping process/moving from international articles to coastal articles
- other treatment may be required as directed.

\* More information on quarantine waste can be found at [section 9](#) of this document.

## 8.3 Post Inspection Interview with the Master

Once the QO has completed the inspection a post inspection interview is conducted with the Master to discuss any quarantine issues identified in the vessel inspection.

## 8.4 Surveillance

All international vessels may be subject to surveillance inspections on succeeding days at the first port of arrival and subsequent port/s of call to ensure continued compliance with all quarantine directions.

## 9. Quarantine Waste

The definition of Quarantine Waste from the [Quarantine Regulations 2000](#) includes:

- Material used to pack or stabilise cargo (dunnage)
- Galley and food waste
- Human animal or plant waste; and
- Refuse or sweepings from holds or decks of vessels or installation

For operational purposes the following are also considered to be quarantine waste and shall be treated as such:

- Any other waste or other material, which comes into contact with quarantine waste;



- Contents of AQIS amnesty bins;
- Any goods surrendered to a QO;
- Articles seized by AQIS which are not collected by clients; and
- Any other import that will not be used in the manner for which it was imported and is to be destroyed

While in port, all vessel waste on deck must be secured so that it is inaccessible to birds or animals i.e. bagged and in lidded deck bins.

No plant or animal material is to be taken off the vessel without prior permission from AQIS.

QO's are not responsible for the collection and disposal of quarantine risk material, however at times may remove small amounts. If it is not possible for the inspecting QO to remove the waste, it is the Master's responsibility to ensure that the waste is disposed of by an AQIS approved service provider (a fee for service will be charged to the vessel).

For more information on approved service providers contact your closest AQIS [regional office](#) ask for the compliance agreement team or contact the Seaports Program [national office](#) for any other queries.

Waste is one of the prescribed matters that a QO can ask a Master to answer questions about (section 28 and regulation 18).

\*Under the *Quarantine Act 1908*, waste is treated as a type of goods and may only be landed at a port that is proclaimed for the landing of waste.

## 10. Goods that can and can't be brought into Australia

Australia has very strict laws relating to the importation and/or possession of certain goods to minimise the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering Australia. Therefore, it is recommended that vessels should consume as much provisions as possible prior to arriving in Australia.

For a list of goods that are not permitted into Australia, please visit the AQIS website at: <http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/travel/entering-australia/cant-take>.

For further information on what goods can be brought into Australia, please refer to the [AQIS Import Conditions online database \(ICON\)](#)

Note: cargo remains subject to quarantine after it is landed and it must only be landed and moved in accordance with sections 44A and 44B the *Quarantine Act 1908*.



## 11. Ship's Pets

Overseas vessels that carry pets are considered high risk therefore require increased surveillance whilst in Australian waters. Prior to arrival at an Australian first port of call, the Master must notify AQIS of the presence of animals onboard the vessel.

The inspecting QO will issue the Master/Owner with the 'Reporting Requirements for Animals on Vessels' form. This form sets out the general conditions for the keeping of animals onboard the vessel and may include additional conditions as invoked by the QO. The 'Master Declaration' section of the form must be completed by the vessel Master and signed by the QO.

The general conditions for vessels with animals onboard are:

- the vessel must be anchored at mid water mooring;
- all animals onboard must be confined in a manner so as to prevent contact with persons or Australian domestic animals;
- the animal must be confined below decks if the vessel is left unattended;
- all animals waste must be disposed of in a manner approved by AQIS;
- AQIS must be notified immediately if the animal becomes sick, dies or escapes whilst in Australia;
- a QO will visit the vessel at each port of call in Australia, or on a regular basis, if the vessel is remaining in the same port, to ensure that the conditions stated on the 'Reporting Requirements for Animals on Vessels' form are being met.
- all subsequent movements around Australia must be reported to AQIS prior to departure and arrival; and
- if the animal is to remain permanently in Australia, contact the AQIS Live Animal Imports on +61 2 6272 4454 or email [animalimp@aqis.gov.au](mailto:animalimp@aqis.gov.au) to determine eligibility for import.

Further information for maintaining specific ship's pet while in Australia can be found at [www.daff.gov.au/aqis/avm/vessels/less-25m/pets](http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/avm/vessels/less-25m/pets) .



## 12. Biofouling

Since 2005, AQIS has been conducting a voluntary Biofouling Management regime for overseas vessels less than 25 meters in length arriving in Australia.

It is anticipated that the Australian Government will move towards mandatory risk-based Biofouling Management Requirements for all overseas vessels arriving in Australia and that the requirements will remain consistent with AQIS's current recommended cleaning practices.

These include:

- application of an effective anti-fouling coating suited to the operation of the vessel
- inspecting, and if necessary, cleaning your vessel including niche areas (including but not limited to internal seawater systems, sea chests, rudder stock and propeller shafts) anchors, chains and other ancillary gear immediately prior to arrival in Australia
- once inspected and cleaned at an overseas port, departing immediately and travelling directly to Australia to minimise re-contamination
- maintaining a voyage and biofouling maintenance log and other documentation that supports any biofouling mitigation activities undertaken.

Under the requirements, the focus will likely be on whether the operator's maintenance regime has been effective in minimising the biofouling accumulation on the vessel, to guard against the presence of quarantinable biofouling pests.

As such, in-water inspections of vessels to determine the level and nature of biofouling present will be a component of the requirements. This may be either as a pre-arrival preparatory action by the vessel owner/operator or an on-arrival inspection. AQIS is proposing that a list of appropriately qualified divers be available for vessel owners to perform these in-water inspections.

The AQIS Seaports website will be updated when implementation of these requirements can be confirmed.

## 13. Vessel Returning from the Torres Strait

Australia's quarantine laws are designed to manage the risk associated with the introduction of exotic pests and diseases entering the Torres Strait, or spreading from the Strait to mainland Australia.

If you've visited or operated in the Torres Strait you must contact AQIS to arrange a vessel inspection – preferably at Thursday Island before you leave the Strait, or you can report to another AQIS office up to four days before you first make landfall on the mainland. You can contact AQIS via phone, email, VHF (channel 16) or through local harbour authorities.

For further information on the Quarantine rules for visiting the Torres Strait please go to the AQIS website at <http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/quarantine/naqs/pubs/torres-strait>.



## 14. Importing a Vessel into Australia

If the vessel is being sailed, motored or towed into Australia, the vessel must obtain pratique clearance from the first port of entry (please refer to [section 5](#) of this document).

For the latest information on importing vessels please refer to the [AQIS Import Condition \(ICON\) Database](#) .

Contact an [AQIS regional office](#) to arrange an inspection prior to the vessel arrival.

To obtain information on duties and tax payable, contact the Australian Custom Service at [information@customs.gvo.au](mailto:information@customs.gvo.au) .

Please note: Customs brokers in Australia and overseas will also be able to assist with the procedures on the importation of yachts. Please be advised there will be costs incurred for this service.

## 15. Fees and Charges

The Seaports Program is a cost recovered program that provides services to the shipping industry. Upon completion of inspections, the QO will issue the Master with a Tax Invoice which will need to be paid preferably by a credit card. In the event that credit card are not available, cash payments can be made at an AQIS office.

Please note: QOs do not accept cash payments.

For further information on fees and charging or to obtain a copy of the Seaports fees schedule please visit the AQIS Seaports website at [www.aqis.gov.au/shipping](http://www.aqis.gov.au/shipping).



## 16. Useful Contacts

### **Australian Customs Service**

The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (Customs) manages the security and integrity of Australia's borders.

For further information on Customs requirements please contact:

Customs National Information Line  
phone: 1300 363 263 or +61 2 6275 6666 (outside Australia)  
website <http://www.customs.gov.au/>  
email: [information@customs.gov.au](mailto:information@customs.gov.au)

### **Department of Immigration and Citizenship**

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship maintains the Movement Alert List and enforces Australia's visa regime.

For further information on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's requirements please contact 131 881 or if you are outside Australia and wish to make an enquiry please contact your nearest Overseas Office website: [www.immi.gov.au/sea/enquiries/](http://www.immi.gov.au/sea/enquiries/)