



Notice to Mariners

9 of 2026

Prohibition on the Discharge of Exhaust Gas Scrubber Wash Water

The discharge of exhaust gas scrubber wash water is prohibited within the limits of the Drogheda Port Company. This procedure applies to all vessels within the Drogheda Port jurisdiction, which includes the waters under the authority of Drogheda Port Company and vessels on transit to and from any berth or anchorage.

1. References

- Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) & Water Framework Directive.
- European Union (Sulphur Content of Marine Fuels) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 361 of 2015).

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Harbour Master is responsible for disseminating it to shipping via Notices to Mariners.

2.2 Vessel Masters are responsible for ensuring compliance with this procedure.

3. Procedure

3.1 The recent tightening of the fuel sulphur limits has promoted the use of exhaust gas scrubbers to reduce sulphur emissions to air. While exhaust gas scrubbers reduce the atmospheric emissions of a number of pollutants, wash water discharges from scrubbers operated in certain modes may have significant environmental and ecological impacts. Of particular concern are the emissions of heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), nitrogen oxides (NOx), and the acidification of receiving waters.

3.2 A number of these pollutants are identified as priority substances requiring the introduction of control measures to progressively reduce their discharge as set out in Article 16 of Directive 2000/60/EC (The Water Framework Directive), and for which environmental quality standards have been set in Directive 2008/105/EC (The Environmental Quality Standards Directive).

3.3 While the long-term environmental effects of exhaust gas scrubbers remain unassessed, the potential impacts on sensitive ecosystems especially within Natura 2000 sites designated under the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) are of significant concern. In light of these risks, and given the ecological importance of Drogheda Port and its surroundings, Drogheda Port Company prohibits the discharge of wash water from exhaust gas scrubber systems into surface waters within its jurisdiction.

This is in keeping with the Precautionary Principle, as detailed in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, aimed at ensuring a higher level of environmental protection through preventative decision-taking in the case of risk.

Capt. Laurence Kirwan
Harbourmaster & Pilotage Superintendent
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