

What is the VCS

The Vessel Compliance Scheme (VCS) has been designed with the best interest of vessel operators and shipping agents in mind.

VCS is part of a comprehensive strategy to provide greater transparency of Australia's biosecurity requirements aimed at facilitating compliance by our clients and stakeholders.

The scheme has been developed to improve the transparency of the risks biosecurity officers will focus on as part of the inspections, and the consequences of non-compliance. This will ensure vessel masters and crew are able to better prepare the vessel to reduce the likelihood of non-compliance, thereby improving their chances of qualifying as 'compliant' entities to take advantage of reduced intervention and associated benefits.

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.

This demerit action list and associated points determines vessel eligibility for the VCS. The application of a demerit action does not replace any other enforcement actions available to the department under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

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/



The 'Biosphere' Graphic Element

The biosphere is a key part of the department's visual identity. Individual biospheres are used to visually describe the diverse nature of the work we do as a department, in Australia and internationally.



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture
and Water Resources

Vessel Compliance Scheme (VCS) for Commercial Maritime Vessels

Biosecurity

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Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

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agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/avm/vessels

Reporting	
Demerit Action	Demerit Points
Failure to report illness on board	10
Failure to update illness report	10
Failure to notify the department of medicavac as a result of illness	10
Cruise vessel failing to report percentage of cases of gastro-intestinal illness on board	8
Failure to report death on board	10
Failure to declare a ship's pet/animal	10
Undeclared deceased animal/s found on board	6
Undeclared hitchhiker animal	10
Failure to report plants on board	3
Incorrect reporting on Ballast Water Report — minor	2
Incorrect reporting on Ballast Water Report — major	7
Incorrect reporting on Ballast Water Report — critical	10
Entry to a non-first point of entry without prior approval	10
Submission of a Pre-Arrival Report less than 12 hours from arrival at port or anchorage	8
Failure to submit a Pre-Arrival Report prior to arrival at port or anchorage	10
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

Documentation	
Failure to present medical log	1
Failure to present Biosecurity Status Document (BSD)	4
Failure to present Ship Sanitation Certificate	10
Failure to present Freedom from AGM Certificate	10
Failure to present approved and valid ballast water documentation	8
Failure to demonstrate indications of competence in using and maintaining the treatment system as specified in the Ballast Water Management Plan	7
Failure to present approved Ballast Water Management Plan or ballast water operations not conducted in accordance with the Ballast Water Management Plan	8
Failure to maintain accurate ballast water records	7
Failure to keep Ballast Water Records on board for 2 years	1

Sanitation	
Inadequate storage of waste —minor	3
Inadequate storage of waste —major	7
Inadequate storage of waste —critical	10
Infestation of insects found on board - minor	3
Infestation of insects found on board - major	6
Infestation of insects found on board - critical	10
Evidence of rodent infestation — minor	3
Evidence of rodent infestation — major	5
Evidence of rodent infestation — critical	10
Spillage of food material presenting sanitation risk — minor	3
Spillage of food material presenting sanitation risk — major	6
Evidence of seeds, meal or organic material on deck — light contamination	2
Evidence of seeds, meal or organic material on deck — moderate contamination	5
Evidence of seeds, meal or organic material on deck - heavy contamination	10
Mosquito risk — low	1
Mosquito risk — medium	4
Mosquito risk — high	10
Failure to clean decks that result in minor issues	4
Failure to clean decks that result in significant issues	10

Directions	
Failure to follow directions on the Biosecurity Status Document (BSD)	10
Failure to follow conditions on the Ship Sanitation Control Certificate	10
Declared ship's pet/animal not managed as directed	10
Incorrect discharge of waste	10
Plants not kept in accordance with the Biosecurity Status Document (BSD)	7
Unauthorised discharge of ballast water	10

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

How You Can Comply

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
Report all instances of gastro-intestinal illness on board cruise vessels, if greater than 3 per cent of the total number of crew and passengers on board as part of pre-arrival reporting. Submit updated reports for any changes to gastro-intestinal illness information during the voyage in Australia
Report all deaths on board
Declare all ships pets and animals (dead or alive) on board including birds and reptiles as part of pre-arrival reporting
Keep a look out for hitchhiker pests. Report any insects or animals (not a pet) on the vessel during the voyage in Australia
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
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
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
Submit pre-arrival reporting information 96-12 hours prior to arrival at an Australian port or anchorage
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
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
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

Maintain all medical logs on board and keep updated at all times
The latest version of the BSD must be made available to a biosecurity officer on request
The latest version of the Ship Sanitation Certificate as declared must be made available to a biosecurity officer on request
The latest version of the Freedom from AGM Certificate as declared must be made available to a biosecurity officer on request
Ensure the vessel has a ballast water record system and a valid ballast water certificate available to a biosecurity officer on request
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
Ensure the vessel has an approved Ballast Water Management Plan and that operations are appropriately managed in accordance with the vessel's Ballast Water Management Plan and Australian requirements
Ensure all ballast water related records on board are kept up to date
Keep the last 2 years of ballast water records on board and make them available to a biosecurity officer on request

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
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
Keep a look out for rodent activity and report any evidence (live, dead or rodent droppings) during the voyage in Australia. 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 rodent related issue will be determined by a biosecurity officer during the inspection, and may incur between 3 and 10 demerit points
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
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
Eliminate any breeding sites for mosquitos and larvae. Monitor for any water accumulation in either vessel structures or other receptacles which could harbour adult mosquitos 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
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

Follow all directions contained in the latest version of the BSD
Follow all directions contained in the latest version of the Ship Sanitation Control Certificate
Follow all directions for declared pets or animals on board
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
Follow all directions contained in the latest version of the BSD including any specific conditions for plants on board
Follow all ballast water information contained in the latest version of the BSD