Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Conveyance waste recycling guide: commercial and cruise vessels



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Cataloguing data
This publication (and any material sourced from it) should be attributed as: DAFF 2026, *Conveyance waste recycling guide: commercial and cruise vessels*, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra. CC BY 4.0.

This publication is available at agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/aircraft-vessels-military/vessels/waste-recycling.

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Acknowledgement of Country
We acknowledge the continuous connection of First Nations Traditional Owners and Custodians to the lands, seas, and waters of Australia. We recognise their care for and cultivation of Country. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and recognise their knowledge and contribution to the productivity, innovation and sustainability of Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries.

Contents

Introduction **1**

Background 1

Purpose 1

Who can recycle 1

How to register 1

Contact 2

1 Prior to arrival **3**

1.1 Proactive waste management 3

1.2 Biosecurity risk 3

1.3 Eligible waste materials 3

1.4 Ineligible waste materials 4

1.5 Discharge locations 4

1.6 Request waste removal 5

1.7 Cleaning 5

1.8 Sorting 5

1.9 Segregate and store 5

1.10 Pallets 5

1.11 Labelling 5

1.12 Complete the maritime waste recycling report 5

1.13 Request waste removal 6

2 First point of entry inspections **7**

2.1 Biosecurity officer inspection 7

2.2 After inspection 7

3 Recycling at subsequent ports **8**

Glossary **9**

Appendix A: Example waste recycling label **11**

Introduction

Background

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* all international conveyances and goods entering Australian territory are subject to biosecurity control and remain subject to that control until formally released or they depart Australian territory.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is responsible for regulating Australia's biosecurity, including the clearance of international conveyances and associated goods, such as ship-generated waste, on arrival in Australia.

Purpose

This document provides conveyance operators with practical guidance to meet biosecurity obligations when discharging conveyance-generated waste materials for onshore recycling. It outlines the key requirements for managing biosecurity risks in accordance with Australian Government legislation, primarily the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and subordinate legislation.

Who can recycle

Currently only commercial and cruise vessels that have demonstrated effective onboard processes to manage biosecurity risks pre-border are eligible to discharge conveyance-generated waste for recycling, subject to inspection and release by a biosecurity officer on arrival at a first point of entry. Livestock vessels are not eligible to recycle waste.

Industry participants or other stakeholders who can demonstrate effective measures to manage biosecurity risks on other international conveyances may submit a proposal for consideration by the department.

How to register

Vessel agents or masters of international commercial and cruise vessels seeking to discharge eligible waste for recycling must submit an initial proposal request to conveyance.maritime@aff.gov.au.

For each participating vessel, the request must include:

- IMO number and name of participating vessel(s)
- proposed waste discharge port(s)
- name of waste providers under an approved arrangement and recycling providers for each port discharge location.

Operators may register more than one vessel under a single proposal, subject to all vessels being able to meet onboard waste management requirements.

Contact

To stay informed about your biosecurity obligations:

- subscribe to our Import industry advice notices
- see Vessels, aircraft and military and Conveyance waste recycling.

For queries about maritime waste recycling, call 1800 900 090 or email conveyance.maritime@aff.gov.au.

1 Prior to arrival

1.1 Proactive waste management

Proactive onboard waste management prior to arrival in Australia is a key risk mitigation measure that reduces the biosecurity risk of invasive pests and diseases associated with ship-generated waste, supports recycling and facilitates efficient port clearance.

Effective onboard waste management should remove or appropriately manage any contaminants that may present a biosecurity risk.

Contaminants may include:

- food residues
- plant, animal or other organic materials
- biosecurity risk materials such as packaging exposed to animal, plant, organic products
- other waste.

Taking proactive measures can assist vessels to meet biosecurity requirements and ensure that risks associated with recyclable materials are identified and managed prior to arrival.

1.2 Biosecurity risk

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* defines biosecurity risk as:

a) the likelihood of a disease or pest:
   i) entering Australian territory or a part of Australian territory; or
   ii) establishing itself or spreading in Australian territory or a part of Australian territory; and

b) the potential for any of the following:
   i) the disease or pest to cause harm to human, animal, or plant health
   ii) the disease or pest to cause harm to the environment
   iii) economic consequences associated with the entry, establishment or spread of the disease or pest.

1.3 Eligible waste materials

Specific waste goods that have been generated from the conveyance's normal operations are eligible for recycling, including:

- glass
- aluminium cans
- plastic beverage containers (including cups)
- clean paper and cardboard
- hard plastic containers

- tin, kitchen metal cans, and containers.

1.4 Ineligible waste materials

Biosecurity risk goods

Certain goods may present an unacceptable risk and are ineligible for recycling, including:

- eggs and egg products
- dairy products
- honey
- meat and meat products
- fresh fruit
- seafood
- fresh vegetables.

Packaging from these risk goods that has contained animal, plant or organic material is not eligible for recycling and must be managed as biosecurity waste. This includes:

- plastic, paper and cardboard packaging
- contaminated soft plastics, plastic wrap/film, polystyrene foam and used aluminium foil
- plastic, paper and cardboard packaging exposed to any other biosecurity risk.

Other goods

Other goods, including scrap metals, used furniture and batteries, are subject to import conditions (see BICON) or disposal as biosecurity waste in an approved manner.

All vaping goods are prohibited under the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956 and are not permitted to be discharged as recycling or biosecurity waste.

1.5 Discharge locations

Waste for recycling can only be discharged after release from biosecurity control at a first point of entry on the vessel's arrival from an international port.

Under section 18 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, 'first point of entry' is a port that has been determined under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* section 229.

The individual determination for each landing place or port may also specify what goods may or may not be unloaded at the first point of entry. A biosecurity entry point may specify where those goods must be unloaded.

Not all first points of entry can accept conveyance waste for recycling. Check with your vessel or ground services agent to ensure you are permitted to discharge waste at your intended first point of entry.

1.6 Request waste removal

Vessels must submit a waste removal request through the Maritime and Aircraft Reporting System (MARS) and ensure their vessel agent has planned with appropriate service providers for the collection of both recycling and biosecurity waste following inspection.

Meeting biosecurity requirements

1.7 Cleaning

All waste for recycling must be clean and free of biosecurity risk materials. Cleaning may be achieved through physical removal of solid food residues and washing where appropriate.

Citrus wedges and food residues in crushed glass are contaminants and account for most glass being rejected for recycling and directed for disposal as biosecurity waste. Similar contamination issues occur with fruit and vegetable cartons, and food residues in tins and metal kitchen cans and containers. This results in otherwise recyclable materials being classified as biosecurity waste.

1.8 Sorting

Eligible waste materials must be sorted by type so they can be inspected by biosecurity officers and accepted for domestic recycling. For example, a mix of kitchen tins and aluminium cans is not acceptable and will be directed for disposal as biosecurity waste.

Waste must be sorted to ensure that only eligible, clean recyclable items are presented for biosecurity inspection. Materials that pose an unacceptable biosecurity risk must be removed during sorting (see Biosecurity risk goods). This includes egg cartons, meat trays, fruit and vegetable cartons, soft plastics and used aluminium foil.

1.9 Segregate and store

Sorted recyclables must be segregated from other waste and separated by type. Each recyclable material type must be stored in its own container. Storage containers may be a clean lined bin, new bulk bag, bulk box or, for smaller quantities, new clear plastic bags. Recyclables must be packaged to allow visual inspection in bulk bags, bins or on pallets.

All packaging used must be clean and new except for clean bins that remain onboard.

1.10 Pallets

Any pallets used for recycling must be ISPM 15–stamped or constructed of non-wood materials (e.g. plastic). Pallets must be clean and free of any biosecurity risk material.

1.11 Labelling

Clearly label the contents on each bin, bag, bulk bag, bulk box or pallet. Labels are used to identify waste released for recycling by biosecurity officers. An example of a recycling label is shown in Appendix A.

1.12 Complete the maritime waste recycling report

Download and complete the Conveyance Waste Recycling Report - Commercial and Cruise Vessels.

1.13 Request waste removal

Vessel masters must submit a waste removal request through the Maritime and Aircraft Reporting System (MARS). They must ensure their vessel agent has planned with appropriate service providers for the collection of recycling and biosecurity waste following inspection.

2 First point of entry inspections

2.1 Biosecurity officer inspection

Biosecurity officers must inspect the waste presented for recycling prior to discharge. If a biosecurity officer is not available to inspect the waste, it must be retained onboard or managed as biosecurity waste.

Vessels masters must:

1) Present the completed Conveyance Waste Recycling Report - Commercial and Cruise Vessels to the biosecurity officer. This will be used to record the results of the officer's inspection and provide a formal release from biosecurity control of the eligible materials for recycling.
2) Present each type of recyclable in its own bin, bulk bag or pallet.
3) Ensure the recycling is clearly labelled. Recyclables must be packaged to allow visual inspection in bulk bags, bins or on plastic or ISPM 15–compliant pallets.

The biosecurity officer may require the recycling to be moved to enable full inspection of each pallet. Commercial vessels discharging smaller quantities may present each type of recyclable in new plastic bags. We recommend using clear plastic bags to facilitate inspection.

2.2 After inspection

The vessel is required to provide their own method of labelling to clearly identify recyclables released from biosecurity control following onboard inspection (see Appendix A).

Recyclables that do not meet requirements will be deemed biosecurity waste and must be disposed of in a biosecurity-approved manner or retained onboard.

Recyclables that have been released from biosecurity control may be discharged. Provide your stevedore or waste provider with a copy of the signed maritime waste recycling report.

Commercial vessels using large plastic bags for recyclables may be required to remove the plastic bag prior to disposal of the recyclables – check with your recycling service provider.

3 Recycling at subsequent ports

For waste to be inspected for recycling at subsequent ports, a biosecurity officer must have inspected the waste at the vessel's first point of entry and not rejected any recycling materials during that inspection.

For cruise vessels, inspections of recyclable waste at subsequent ports may only be undertaken during a domestic leg of the voyage. Inspections at subsequent ports are subject to:

- biosecurity officer availability
- the port being a determined port for offloading waste goods
- the receiving port's capacity to accept recycling materials.

The vessel must have other biosecurity inspections scheduled at the same time (such as a crew change inspection). Inspections of waste for recycling will be conducted consecutively with these other biosecurity inspections.

Vessel agents are responsible for liaising directly with the local DAFF port office to confirm biosecurity officer availability.

Vessel masters or agents must acknowledge that if biosecurity officers are unable to attend the subsequent port to conduct waste for recycling inspections, then recycling must either:

- remain onboard the vessel, or
- be disposed of as biosecurity waste in a biosecurity-approved manner.

Glossary

Term	Definition
approved arrangement	Has the same meaning as *Biosecurity Act 2015*, s 10: 'An approved arrangement is an arrangement for which an approval is in force under paragraph 406(1)(a) (including a varied arrangement for which an approval is in force under that paragraph as it applies because of subsection 412(3)).'
biosecurity entry point	Has the same meaning as *Biosecurity Act 2015*, s 13: An area of a landing place or port that is designated under the Act as a biosecurity entry point for that conveyance or class of conveyance. An area of a landing place or port that is designated under the Act as a biosecurity entry point for those goods or a class of goods.
biosecurity officer	A person who is authorised under section 545 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* to be a biosecurity officer.
biosecurity risk	Has the same meaning as Biosecurity Act 2015, s 9 (except as provided by s 310 or s 614B): '(a) the likelihood of a disease or pest: (i) entering Australian territory or a part of Australian territory; or (ii) establishing itself or spreading in Australian territory or a part of Australian territory; and (b) the potential for any of the following: (i) the disease or pest to cause harm to human, animal or plant health; (ii) the disease or pest to cause harm to the environment; (iii) economic consequences associated with the entry, establishment or spread of the disease or pest.'
commercial vessel	Not expressly defined by the Act or Regulation. Determinations will use terminology such as 'vessels other than non-commercial vessels'. See also 'conveyance', 'non-commercial vessel', 'passenger vessel'.
conveyance	Has the same meaning as *Biosecurity Act 2015*, s 16: '(1) Conveyance means any of the following: (a) an aircraft; (b) a vessel; (c) a vehicle; (d) a train (including railway rolling stock); (e) any other means of transport as prescribed by the regulations.'
conveyance generated waste	Waste generated through the normal operations of a conveyance. It does not include waste carried on a conveyance as cargo.
cruise vessel	Has the same meaning as 'passenger vessel'.
domestic leg (domestic voyage)	That part of a journey that occurs after the conveyances first point of entry and is a direct transit from one Australian port or landing place to the next Australian port or landing place.
eligible waste materials	Specified waste materials that: • can be managed to present a low biosecurity risk • have been assessed by the department to present a low biosecurity risk when managed in accordance with department requirements • are accepted by onshore providers for recycling.

Term	Definition
first point of entry	Has the same meaning as *Biosecurity Act 2015*, s 18: A landing place or port that has been determined under the Act, s 223(1)(a), 229 (1)(a), or for goods s 223(1)(b) or s 229(1)(b).
goods	Has the same meaning as *Biosecurity Act 2015*, s 19: '(1) Goods includes the following: (a) an animal (b) a plant (whether moveable or not) (c) a sample or specimen of a disease agent (d) a pest (e) mail (f) any other article, substance, or thing (including but not limited to, any kind of moveable property).' Excludes: • ballast water • human remains • conveyances (unless that conveyance is carried on another conveyance).
livestock vessel	A specialised commercial vessel for the transportation of live animals.
Maritime and Aircraft Reporting System (MARS)	Online web portal used by international vessel masters and shipping agents to submit pre-arrival documents required for arrival in Australian territory to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. MARS is used by biosecurity officers for the management of international conveyance arrivals.
non-commercial vessel (NCV)	Has the same meaning as Biosecurity Regulations 2026, s 5: 'a vessel that is used, or is intended to be used, wholly for recreational purposes'.
passenger vessel	Has the same meaning as *Biosecurity Act 2015*, s 9: 'a vessel that has the capacity to carry 12 or more passengers'.
segregated	Set apart or isolated from biosecurity risk materials such as general (biosecurity) waste.

Appendix A: Example waste recycling label

Waste recycling labels are used to clearly identify waste released for recycling by biosecurity officers. The labels must:

- be at least 99.1 mm x 139 mm in size
- include the recycling symbol, the number of each pallet and total number of pallets released for recycling (e.g. 1 of 5)
- be affixed by crew to each bin, bag, box or pallet approved for recycling during the biosecurity officer's inspection
- be affixed to at least 2 visible sides of the waste for recycling
- not be affixed to any waste directed for biosecurity disposal.

Figure 1 Example waste recycling label

