



Australian Government

**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

Inorganic Fertiliser Management Policy suite

Attachment 3: Marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection guidelines and certificate template

March 2026



© Commonwealth of Australia 2026

Ownership of intellectual property rights

Unless otherwise noted, copyright (and any other intellectual property rights) in this publication is owned by the Commonwealth of Australia (referred to as the Commonwealth).

Creative Commons licence

All material in this publication is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) except content supplied by third parties, logos and the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.



Cataloguing data

This publication (and any material sourced from it) should be attributed as: DAFF 2026, *Attachment 3: Marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection guidelines and certificate template*, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra, March. CC BY 4.0.

This publication is available at agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/import/goods/fertiliser/chem-mined.

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

GPO Box 858 Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone 1800 900 090

Web agriculture.gov.au

Disclaimer

The Australian Government acting through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has exercised due care and skill in preparing and compiling the information and data in this publication. Notwithstanding, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, its employees and advisers disclaim all liability, including liability for negligence and for any loss, damage, injury, expense or cost incurred by any person as a result of accessing, using or relying on any of the information or data in this publication to the maximum extent permitted by law.

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

Overview	1
Documentation requirements.....	2
1 Marine surveyor’s vessel inspection certificate.....	3
Marine surveyor’s vessel inspection certificate	3
Marine surveyor’s vessel cleanliness inspection declaration.....	3
Previous 6 cargoes carried.....	4
Certification	4
2 Marine surveyor’s vessel cleanliness inspection guidelines.....	5
2.1 Safety	5
2.2 Vessel cargo history	5
2.3 Ladders, upper decks and storerooms	6
2.4 Ships’ cranes	6
2.5 Hatch covers	6
2.6 Cargo holds.....	6
2.7 Photographic evidence	7
2.8 General	7
3 Marine surveyor’s vessel cleanliness inspection report template.....	8
Inspection summary	9
Actions to be undertaken	10
Verified true and correct	10

Tables

Table 1 Vessel details	8
Table 2 Contaminant codes.....	9
Table 3 Hold inspection areas	9
Table 4 Deck inspection areas.....	10

Overview

This document is a guide for marine surveyors. It covers the minimum requirements set by the department. Marine surveyors should use this guide along with the [Imported Inorganic Fertiliser Management Policy](#) and their qualifications, experience and expertise when undertaking a marine surveyor's vessel inspection.

Bulk cargo vessels are used to transport anything from inorganic fertiliser to commodities that pose a biosecurity risk. These commodities are often loaded into the vessel on a conveyor belt or individually using cranes or grabs. Contaminant residues of these commodities can become displaced during loading and move a considerable distance, particularly in windy conditions. The size and design of bulk cargo vessels, and equipment used on board, create a number of potential contamination locations.

Contaminants can pose significant biosecurity risks to Australia. Examples include insects, hitchhiker pests, seeds, soil and other plant material, and contaminants of animal or microbial origin.

Due to these factors, inspections of bulk cargo vessels must be conducted meticulously and in conditions that enable the identification and effective removal of any biosecurity contamination risks.

The marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection involves:

- review of a vessel's cargo logs to verify it has not carried actionable cargo within the last 6 cargoes
- before loading commences, inspection of holds, hatches, decks and ship equipment to ensure the areas are free from biosecurity contamination risks.

If any biosecurity contamination risks are identified during the inspection, the marine surveyor must issue a certificate attesting to the historical and present cleanliness of any vessel (including holds) that will transport consignments to Australia.

The marine surveyor's vessel inspection must be conducted, led and certified by a suitably qualified marine surveyor.

A marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection is a requirement for all imported consignments of bulk in-ships-hold, loose or bagged inorganic fertiliser.

Documentation requirements

The marine surveyor must complete the:

- [Marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection report](#)
- [Marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection certificate](#).

A marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection certificate must be issued once the inspection is completed and any contaminants identified have been verified as having been removed before entering Australian waters.

The certificate must include the:

- marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection declaration
- record of past cargoes.

The importer must forward the certificate to the department for assessment.

A marine surveyor's vessel inspection report is also required to be prepared as evidence of the inspection and must be provided to the importer responsible for the consignment.

The department may request marine surveyor's vessel inspection reports from importers at any time.

1 Marine surveyor's vessel inspection certificate template

[insert marine surveyor company letterhead]

Marine surveyor's vessel inspection certificate

Report details (e.g. report number)	[insert details]
Name of registered entity	[insert details]
Registered entity identifier (AEI)	[insert details]
Consignment link	[insert details]
Date of inspection (dd/mm/yyyy)	[insert details]
Name of surveyor	[insert details]
Surveyor company	[insert details]
Vessel name, voyage number or call sign	[insert details]
Load port and country	[insert details]
Cargo	[insert details]

I [insert name] _____ hereby declare that a cleanliness inspection of this vessel has been conducted as per the relevant import conditions and the vessel cleanliness inspection guidelines.

The vessel cleanliness inspection was conducted on [insert dd/mm/yyyy] _____, commencing at [insert (24-hr) 00:00 hrs] _____ and ending at [insert (24-hr) 00:00 hrs] _____.

I have prepared a marine surveyor's vessel inspection report as evidence of the inspection and have provided this to the importer responsible for the consignment. The importer can provide this report to the department upon request.

Marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection declaration

I hereby certify that:

- 1) The vessel cleanliness inspection was conducted or overseen by the marine surveyor as per the marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection guidelines, including use of a high-reach lift.

No

Yes

2) No biosecurity risk contaminants were identified.

No

Yes

3) Biosecurity risk contaminants were identified and removed, and affected areas reinspected and verified as being free from biosecurity risk contaminants.

No

Yes

Not applicable

4) The vessel was not loaded until the vessel inspection was complete and the vessel deemed free from biosecurity risk contaminants.

No

Yes

Previous 6 cargoes carried

Cargo (most recent first)	Load date (dd/mm/yyyy)	Cargo or commodity description	Load port and country
1	[insert details]	[insert details]	[insert details]
2	[insert details]	[insert details]	[insert details]
3	[insert details]	[insert details]	[insert details]
4	[insert details]	[insert details]	[insert details]
5	[insert details]	[insert details]	[insert details]
6	[insert details]	[insert details]	[insert details]

Certification

Certified true and correct.

Marine surveyor's full name (printed)

Marine surveyor's position title

Marine surveyor's signature

Marine surveyor's official stamp

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

2 Marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection guidelines

Inspections of bulk cargo vessels must be carried out during daylight hours only, with hatches open and with the use of high reach-lifts (where applicable) to enable proper access to all areas of the holds. Appropriate high-powered handheld lighting and extendable mirrors should be used to assist inspection processes where required.

2.1 Safety

Marine surveyors should adhere to safe working practices, including abiding by country, port and local safe work practice procedures, using qualified and licensed operators of lifting equipment, and ensuring equipment is well maintained.

When in any hold space, ensure the hatch is open, the space is well-ventilated, and a person remains standing by on deck in case of emergency.

The vessel master should be asked to declare whether any holds have been chemically treated in the past 4 weeks. If holds were treated, the chemical must be clearly identified and appropriate safety precautions taken to ensure safe entry in spaces.

2.2 Vessel cargo history

Prior to commencing the vessel cleanliness inspection, the marine surveyor must include in their report a list of the last 6 cargoes carried by the vessel. This will enable the department to assess the likelihood of any biosecurity risk contaminants present on the vessel.

The record of past cargoes must cover:

- load dates of the past 6 cargoes
- a description of the cargo or commodity
- the load port and country.

For new vessels, maiden voyage details are acceptable.

Any vessels seeking to be assessed as Level 1 must not have carried actionable cargo in the previous 6 cargoes.

Vessels that have carried actionable cargo in the past 6 cargoes are at an increased risk of harbouring residues of these cargoes. Any consignment of inorganic fertiliser shipped in a vessel that has carried actionable cargo in its last 6 cargoes will receive a Level 3 rating, regardless of a marine surveyor's vessel inspection outcomes.

2.3 Ladders, upper decks and storerooms

All ladders need to be checked for contaminants, with special attention paid to ladders with box sections capable of trapping residues. Ladder falls coated with grease or similar lubricants should be inspected to ensure that no residues are adhering.

The marine surveyor must:

- make a close inspection of all upper deck areas and areas under pipelines, walkways, the tops of mast houses, storerooms and around any deck fittings
- ensure all mooring positions, including mooring machinery, rollers and ropes are inspected, with a focus on locations or instruments with grease applied to them.

Any storerooms that need to be accessed during the vessel's intended Australian coastal passage, should be stripped of all contents, inspected, and cleaned. Loose gear stowed in internal passageways should also be inspected and cleaned.

2.4 Ships' cranes

Few Australian ports are equipped with discharge cranes and therefore ships' cranes are usually used for discharge. Therefore, crane access ways and cabins must be inspected to ensure they are entirely free from contaminant residues. Greased crane wires and block or hook arrangements should be inspected to ensure that no contaminant residues are adhering. Vessel grabs need to be closely examined and any contaminant residues removed.

2.5 Hatch covers

All hatch covers should be opened and closed at least 3 times prior to inspection or cleaning, to dislodge any residues of past cargoes. Hatch cover wheels and hinges are usually well-greased and need to be carefully examined.

The tops of hatch covers should be inspected while slightly opened so the joins between the covers can be seen, paying attention to water drainage channels fitted on hatch tops.

Quick-acting cleats should be operated to ensure that no contaminant residues are trapped, and securing dogs around the perimeter of the hatch coamings should be cleaned.

Drains in coaming track ways should be cleaned out using compressed air or a water jet.

The undersides of hatch covers may be inspected in a partially open position from a high-reach lift during the hold inspection. If the internal framing of the hatch covers is exposed, it may be preferable to climb up the inside of the hatch covers when they are in the fully opened position. Every section inside the open framed covers must be examined.

Hatch sealing rubbers and housing channels should be closely examined, and any damaged rubber should be replaced.

2.6 Cargo holds

Cargo holds must be free from any previous cargo residues, clean and dry, and fit to receive and preserve the intended cargo.

The marine surveyor must gain access to all areas inside each cargo hold. A high-reach lift, operated only by suitably trained personnel, must be used to provide close access to the upper reaches of the cargo holds. We recommend the use of a high-reach lift with a telescopic boom capable of 360-degree rotation and large enough to comfortably reach all areas of the hold.

All areas where contaminant residues might be found inside cargo holds should be carefully inspected. Some common areas where contaminants can be located are pipe brackets, ship's frame brackets, angle steel pipe protectors, ventilator trunks in deck heads, void spaces around the tops of hold entrance ladders and under-deck beams.

Any timber sheathing must be removed so that areas behind or beneath it can be inspected. For tank plated sides with deep water ballast tanks, the marine surveyor must lift and close the lashing D-ring inserts forcibly at least once to ensure any loose contaminants are dislodged.

If any areas cannot be properly inspected due to ship's fittings, these must be removed to permit the required inspection.

Consider marking inspected sections with chalk to ensure no part of the vessel is missed.

2.7 Photographic evidence

If a high-reach lift has been used in the areas you inspected, include photographic evidence in the Marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection report. Each photograph must show the date legibly chalked on the ship's hold.

2.8 General

The following items must also be inspected and free from biosecurity risk contamination:

- all bilge, access way, manhole and tank top covers
- bilge wells (these should also be clean and dry)
- ventilator shafts and temperature monitoring pipes. If it is not possible to determine compliance, such areas must be sealed but only after obtaining vessel master approval.

3 Marine surveyor's vessel cleanliness inspection report template

Use this template to:

- summarise the outcomes of your inspection of a vessel that will be used to import inorganic fertiliser into Australia
- ensure that you have completed all necessary components of the vessel cleanliness inspection and can verify the vessel's cleanliness.

The certificate that you issue will be based on this report.

When you compile the report:

- refer to relevant commercial, ship and consignment details
- include detailed photographic evidence of each component of the vessel cleanliness inspection
- provide evidence (e.g. a signed entry in the ship's log) that the marine surveyor listed on the report completed the document and attended the vessel.

Table 1 Vessel details

Report details (e.g. number)	[insert details]
Name of registered entity	[insert details]
Registered entity identifier (AEI)	[insert details]
Consignment link	[insert details]
Date of inspection (dd/mm/yyyy)	[insert details]
Name of surveyor	[insert details]
Surveyor company	[insert details]
Vessel name, voyage number or call sign	[insert details]
Load port and country	[insert details]
Cargo	[insert details]

Inspection summary

The inspection should be thorough, with emphasis on, but not limited to, areas listed in Table 3 and Table 4.

If you find contaminants, use the codes in Table 2 to complete Table 3 and Table 4. If you find multiple contaminants, use a forward slash to separate each (e.g. 'PM/S' to indicate plant material and sand). If goods in containers or holds are in acceptable condition for loading, record them as 'PASS'.

Table 2 Contaminant codes

Contamination	Code
Animal material	AM
Grains or seeds	G
Meals	M
Plant material	PM
Organic, other	O
Mineral	MN
Rust	R
Soil or sand	S
Inorganic, other	I

Table 3 Hold inspection areas

Category	Hold 1	Hold 2	Hold 3	Hold 4	Hold 5
High-reach equipment used – Yes or No	[insert Yes or No]				
Hatch covers, joints and hinges	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Steel pontoons, horizontal stiffeners and pockets	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Coamings, pontoon ledges and hatch covers	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Tracks and seals, deck-head beams and hatch-end beams	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Ship's side frames, stiffeners and fittings	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Pipe casings, flanges, guards and securing brackets	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Spar ceiling and sockets	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Transverse bulkheads, ladders, platforms, ventilation trunking and monitor pipes	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Tank top plating, ceilings and other metal surfaces, manhole covers, bilges and wing tanks	[insert code or 'PASS']				

Table 4 Deck inspection areas

Category	Hold 1	Hold 2	Hold 3	Hold 4	Hold 5
All weather decks, framing and scuppers	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Hatch, ends, sides and piping	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Mast houses and crane structures	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Focсле and focсле lockers	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Ship's gear, including crane drums and wires	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Superstructure	[insert code or 'PASS']				

Actions to be undertaken

Category	Hold 1	Hold 2	Hold 3	Hold 4	Hold 5
Clean	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Descale	[insert code or 'PASS']				
Dismantle or remove	[insert code or 'PASS']				

Additional comments, treatment orders or action to be taken by the vessel master.

Verified true and correct

Marine surveyor full name (printed)

Marine surveyor position title

Marine surveyor signature

Marine surveyor's official stamp

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)
