

# Imported Inorganic Fertiliser Policy Changes (from 30 April 2026)

16 April 2026

---

## Overview

The department manages the importation of **inorganic (chemical and mined) fertiliser** through BICON import conditions and assessment and management policies. These policies enable the registration of offshore entities that can demonstrate effective biosecurity compliance.

The previous **bulk cargo** and **containerised fertiliser** policies (introduced in 2004 and revised in 2005, 2010 and 2017) have now been **combined into a single policy** covering both in-ship's-hold and containerised consignments.

This change reflects:

- Historically **high compliance rates**
  - Strong **industry collaboration and support**
  - A desire to **reduce regulatory burden** while maintaining biosecurity integrity.
- 

## Why the Policy Has Changed

The previous system of offshore registrations and audits was effective but **resource intensive** for both industry and the department.

The updated policy is intended to:

- Reduce duplication in offshore registrations
  - Lower audit burden and cost
  - Increase reliance on upstream assurance and sampling at load
  - Provide clearer accountability across the supply chain
  - Maintain biosecurity standards
-

## Key Changes at a Glance

### Vessel Classifications

- **Level 1 vessel status** now requires:
  - **No actionable cargo for the last 6 voyages**, replacing the previous rolling 2-year requirement.
- This simplifies qualification while maintaining risk control.

### Offshore Entity Registration

- **Level 1 registrations are streamlined:**
  - Entities already registered as Level 1 for either bulk or containerised product can now **add the missing pathway by request**, without a full re-application.
  - New registrations can cover both product
- Registration focus shifts to:
  - Offshore fertiliser manufacturers and their full supply chains.
- Facilities that only store, transport or load fertiliser (with no biosecurity control role) generally no longer need registration.
  - Separate registration may still be approved if a strong business case is demonstrated.

### Audits

- Annual offshore department audits replaced with **independent third-party audits**
- Desk-top audits are maintained on an as-needs basis

## Inspection and Sampling Changes

### Vessel Cleanliness (In-Ship's-Hold)

- Simplified to one outcome:
  - **Acceptable** or **Not acceptable**
- Outcome influences:
  - Consignment risk categorisation
  - On-arrival intervention requirements

### Sampling and Inspection

- **On-arrival in-hold sampling replaced** with:
  - Inspection of **pre-bagged 15-litre samples** per hold
  - Samples collected and secured at loading by a qualified marine surveyor or authorised inspector
  - Declaration required confirming sample handling and placement

- Samples to be taken in accordance with **Loading sample inspection guidelines**

## Load Sampling Certification

- Load sample analysis certificate requirements expanded from **Level 1 to all fertiliser levels**
  - Importers must provide:
    - Load sample analysis certification confirming material is **free from biosecurity risk material**
- 

## Documentation Updates

- Introduction of a **formal registration agreement/acknowledgement**
  - Ensuring registered entities clearly understand and accept their responsibilities
- Inspection guides moved to **policy attachments**:
  - Vessel cleanliness inspection guide
  - Load sample inspection guideline

These are targeted to **marine surveyors and authorised inspectors**, not registered entities

---

## Implementation

- **Go-live**: 30 April 2026
  - Applies to:
    - All goods **loaded on or after 30 April 2026**
  - Transitional arrangements:
    - Goods **loaded and already on water before 30 April** remain subject to the existing import conditions.
- 

## Contact

For further information please see [Chemical and mined fertiliser](#) on the department's website

For further information: [seacargopolicy@aff.gov.au](mailto:seacargopolicy@aff.gov.au)