



Summary of changes to imported inorganic fertiliser assessment and management policies

Overview

The department manages the importation of inorganic (chemical and mined) fertiliser through biosecurity import conditions ([BICON](#)) and two policies that facilitate the registration of offshore entities that have demonstrated their ability to effectively manage inorganic fertiliser biosecurity compliance:

[Imported Inorganic Bulk Cargo Fertiliser Assessment and Management Policy](#)

[Imported Inorganic Containerised Fertiliser Assessment and Management Policy](#).

These policies have been in place for many years; first introduced in 2004 and revised in 2005, 2010 and 2017. Development assistance and support for the policies have been received from Fertilizer Australia and industry broadly since their inception.

The system of registered offshore export facilities has served the department, importers, and registered offshore export facilities well; however, the registration and auditing processes are resource intensive and costly for industry and the department.

Historically, compliance of inorganic fertiliser consignments has been very high. This, along with the strong collaboration and support received from industry, provides the department with confidence that combining, simplifying, and streamlining the policies, to help reduce operational costs and resourcing, is achievable while also maintaining the historically high compliance.

The department has updated the policies, combining them into one, covering both in-ships-hold and containerised consignments, with a view to:

- a. simplify and streamline the requirements with an increased outcomes focus where possible,
- b. recognise the historically high compliance of imported inorganic fertiliser consignments,
- c. reduce the compliance burden for offshore registered entities,
- d. reduce the department's resource burden for offshore entity registration and consignment inspections where appropriate.

In developing the new policy, we have considered feedback from industry representatives, as well as exporter and importer behaviours and compliance. We have compiled a summary of the changes that stakeholders will need to be aware of before implementation.

Summary of Changes

- Reduces vessel classifications from 3 to 2
- Changes Level 1 vessel classification from no actionable cargo for 2 years to no actionable cargo for the last 6 voyages
- Simplifies offshore entity registrations to include only offshore inorganic fertiliser manufacturers and suppliers, removing registrations for facilities that are solely storage, transport or load facilities that do not have control over the biosecurity integrity of the goods through the full supply chain. Separate registration will only be considered should there be a strong business case to do so and will be assessed by Sea Cargo Policy on a case-by-case basis
- Formalises the replacement of department audits of inorganic fertiliser offshore supply chains with permanent, independent third-party audits, which will be required on an as needs basis
- Simplifies vessel cleanliness inspection requirements for in-ships-hold consignments, taking a more outcomes focus and reducing the outcomes to one level. Vessels will be either acceptable or not acceptable, which will then influence a consignment's risk categorisation and on-arrival intervention requirements
- Includes a formalised registration agreement/acknowledgement form to ensure registered entities are fully aware of, and acknowledge, their registration responsibilities
- Moves the vessel cleanliness inspection guide and load sample inspection guideline requirements from the main policy document and includes them as attachments, as this information is aimed at a different audience – marine surveyors/authorised inspectors – who are not registered entities under the policy.
- The creation of alternative level 3 conditions that will allow, under permit, increased sampling on the vessel in lieu of a landed inspection. The permit will have specific conditions for this inspection type to be approved. All samples will be taken by a biosecurity industry participant under biosecurity officer supervision
- Replaces on-arrival in-hold sampling with an on-arrival inspection of a pre-bagged 15-litre sample from each hold. The 15-litre pre bagged sample will be collected and secured by a qualified marine surveyor/authorised inspector at time of loading for export. As part of the import conditions, a declaration will need to be supplied to the department that the samples have been taken, secured and placed on the vessel.
- Expands the load sample requirements from Level 1 to all levels of fertiliser. Importers will now be required to provide a load sample analysis by a marine surveyor or authorised inspector and provide certification to the department to show the inorganic fertiliser is free from biosecurity risk material.

The new policy is set to go live 30 April 2026. For further information, please contact

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