

# Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) - Special Area under MARPOL Annex V: Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Garbage

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## Background

In 2010, IMO MEPC adopted IMO Resolution MEPC.191(60). This resolution established 1 May 2011 as the date for entry into force of the garbage discharge requirements for the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) Special Area under MARPOL Annex V. Most of the States bordering the WCR Special Area have given notice that they now have adequate reception facilities in the relevant ports and accordingly, the entry into force requirements for the WCR as a Special Area have been fulfilled and the resolution came into force on 1 May 2011.

A Special Area is defined under MARPOL Annex V as an area for which stringent requirements apply to the discharge of garbage from ships. The WCR was designated as a Special Area under MARPOL Annex V in 1991 but the discharge requirements did not take effect immediately as adequate port reception facilities were not available in all ports within the WCR region.

Under MARPOL Annex, V Regulation 5(1)(h), the WCR is defined as: *“The Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea proper including the bays and seas therein and that portion of the Atlantic Ocean within the boundary constituted by the 30° N parallel from Florida eastward to 77°30' W meridian, thence a rhumb line to the intersection of 20° N parallel and 59° W meridian, thence a rhumb line to the intersection of 7°20' N parallel and 50° W meridian, thence a rhumb line drawn south westerly to the eastern boundary of French Guiana.”*

## Direct Consequences

Vessels operating within the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) are now prohibited from discharging any garbage into the sea, except food wastes which may be discharged if the vessel is at least 12 nautical miles from the nearest land (or further if practicable) and comminuted or ground food wastes that are capable of passing through a screen with openings no greater than 25mm may be discharged if the vessel is at least 3 nautical miles from the nearest land (or further if possible).

The detailed requirements related to the disposal of garbage within Special Areas, including the WCR, are stipulated under MARPOL Annex V, Regulation 5(2).

## Recommendations

Members and clients should ensure that their vessels are aware of the implementation of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) as a Special Area on 1 May 2011, and are suitably prepared to comply with the more stringent garbage disposal regulations, e.g. onboard placards and garbage management plans should be updated if required. It should also be borne in mind that Port State Control Officers in the region may perform checks to ensure that vessels are adhering to the new requirements.

For more information we refer you to IMO's website: [www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org)

1. Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) – 60th session:  
<http://www.imo.org/mediacentre/meetingsummaries/mepc/pages/mepc-60th-session.aspx>
2. Overview of MARPOL Annex V:  
<http://www.imo.org/ourwork/environment/pollutionprevention/garbage/Pages/Default.aspx>
3. Special Areas under MARPOL:  
<http://www.imo.org/ourwork/environment/pollutionprevention/specialareasundermarpol/Pages/Default.aspx>