

Attention Vessel Owners: How Are You Discarding Your Ships' Waste?

Has your vessel been to a port outside the continental United States or Canada? If so, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) would like you to know that all waste material from your vessel that contains foreign fruits, vegetables and meats (including poultry), as well as materials that have been associated or come in contact with these items, is considered regulated garbage and must be handled according to USDA regulations.

USDA regulations serve to prevent the introduction and spread of foreign plant pests and animal diseases in the US. Illegal dumping of regulated garbage into the harbor, inland waterways or non-designated regulated garbage receptacles is considered a violation, and you can be fined or criminally prosecuted.

Please remember:

- All regulated garbage must be contained in tight, covered and leak-proof receptacles while being stored aboard a vessel within the territorial waters of the US.
- All plastic bags used in the storage or transport of regulated garbage must be at least four (4) Mil (0.004-inch) thick and must be easily identifiable by the unique color of the plastic bag or by tags labeled "Regulated Garbage." These bags must be disposed of in containers labeled "Regulated Garbage" or "International Garbage" while in a US port.
- If regulated garbage is mixed with domestic garbage, then, due to the commingling, it all must be treated as regulated garbage.
- Any person or company handling, hauling or processing regulated garbage must be approved by the USDA and enter into a compliance agreement approved by the USDA.

Don't forget: Regulated garbage that is improperly disposed of can introduce invasive plant pests and animal diseases, such as foot-and-mouth disease, in the US, causing devastating economic and environmental damage to US agriculture and natural resources.

Applying for Permission to move garbage:

APHIS is responsible for the regulations and policies to prevent the introduction of foreign animal and plant diseases and pests including those that may be introduced through the entry of regulated international garbage. The Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is responsible for monitoring the handling and disposal of regulated garbage at the ports of entry. All entities handling, moving or processing regulated garbage must enter into a compliance agreement with CBP.

For additional information, you can contact Dr. Asghar Chaudhry, USDA, Veterinary Regulatory Support/Veterinary Medical Officer (VRS/VMO) at 215-597-2339.

Regulations that pertain to regulated garbage can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 9, Part 94.5 or Title 7, Part 330.400 to 330.403.