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## IMO Guidelines on Shipping Fuel

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The **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** adopted an amendment that supports a reduced limit on sulphur in ships' fuel oil.

- The IMO adopted the new 0.50% limit from the current 3.50% on sulphur in ships' fuel oil.
- The new guidelines will be implemented from January 1, 2020, under **IMO's MARPOL treaty**.
- The limit is likely to have benefits for the environment as well as human health.

## Pollution by Shipping

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- **Discharge into air**
  - There are more than 52,000 ships sailing the ocean which burn more than 2 billion barrels of heavy fuel oil in one year. (Heavy fuel oil, a crude oil byproduct, contains sulfur concentrations up to 1,800 times higher than the diesel fuel used for cars).
  - **Ships contribute between 2 and 3 percent of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions**, through emission of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and carbon dioxide.
- **Ballast Water Discharge**
  - Ballast Water Discharge by ships is responsible for the introduction of invasive species in the oceans.
  - The oceans take in the water from one port and discharge the water during the next port call thus introducing a variety of non-native species in the sea.
- **Sound Pollution:**

Growing levels of noise pollution in the ocean drive fish away from their habitat into their deaths. Sound Pollution also impacts the marine organism who rely on sound for communication, mating calls and catching prey.

- **Oil Spills and Chemical Discharges:**
  - Oil spills have huge and immediate economic, social, and environmental impacts.
  - Local people lose their livelihoods as fisheries and tourism areas are temporarily closed; the cleanup costs are enormous, and tens of thousands of marine animals and plants are killed or harmed.
  - Many ships illegally discharge bilge oil (a mixture of water, oil, lubricants, and other pollutants that collect in a ship's hold) before entering a port as this is cheaper than disposing of it legally at the port.
  - Dumped bilge oil accounts for nearly 10% of all oil entering the oceans each year.
  - Some of these chemicals are toxic, persistent, and bioaccumulative.
- **Collision with Wildlife:**
  - Ships cause physical and other damage: through dropping of anchors, wave disturbances, and striking of whales and other marine mammals.

### **International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Treaty)**

- MARPOL is one of the most significant **international marine environmental conventions**.
- The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (**MARPOL**) is the **main international convention covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes**.
- The MARPOL Convention was adopted on 2 November 1973 at IMO. The Protocol of 1978 was adopted in response to a spate of tanker accidents in 1976-1977.
- The current convention is a combination of the 1973 Convention and the 1978 Protocol, which entered into force on 2 October 1983.
- The Convention includes regulations aimed at preventing and minimizing pollution from ships - **and currently includes six technical Annexes:**
  - Annex I: Regulations for the **Prevention of Pollution by Oil**
  - Annex II: Regulations for the **Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk**
  - Annex III: Prevention of Pollution by **Harmful Substances Carried by Sea in Packaged Form**
  - Annex IV: Prevention of Pollution by **Sewage from Ships**
  - Annex V: Prevention of Pollution by **Garbage from Ships**
  - Annex VI: Prevention of **Air Pollution from Ships**

- In 2011, IMO became the first international regulator for a transport sector to adopt globally binding energy efficiency requirements, which apply to all ships globally, regardless of trading pattern or flag State, aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping.

## **International Maritime Organization**

- The International Maritime Organization is a **specialized agency of the United Nations**.
- IMO is responsible for **measures to improve the safety and security of international shipping and to prevent pollution from ships**.
- It is also involved in legal matters, including **liability and compensation issues and the facilitation of international maritime traffic**.
- It was **established by means of a Convention** adopted under the auspices of the United Nations in Geneva **on 17 March 1948** and met for the first time in January 1959.
- **It currently has 174 Member States**.