

# FAQ on applying for BWMC exemption

## How long will the application process take?

The authorities may only take a month or two to process the application, but biological surveys and preparation of the Risk Assessment may take 8-12 months.

## Do the authorities prepare the Risk Assessment?

No, it is the obligation of the applicant. Having said that, in some cases and for Same Risk Areas risk assessments may already be available.

## Who will do the biological surveys and Risk Assessment?

As it is the obligation of the applicant local companies and consultants with experience should be contracted.

## Who submits the application?

The shipowner submits the application. While the biological surveys and risk assessment will normally be contracted out, the shipowner may choose to manage the application.

## What if I already have BW treatment systems?

You do not have to operate the system during your exemption although it may be prudent to ensure its operability through occasional test runs.

## For how long is the exemption?

The exemption is granted for five years. Under certain circumstances the authority's midterm review after 36 months may revoke the exemption. Until the BWMC is fully implemented in 2024 exemptions granted are not expected to be revoked.

## Can I start operating the route without the exemption?

Generally, if you do not have BW treatment systems installed then no. If you are already operating the route under D-1 exchange or under D-2, i.e. discharges via an installed BW treatment system, you may continue to operate until you get your exemption.

## Must the vessel have clean tanks before starting to operate a route under exemption?

Yes, if your vessel has operated with untreated ballast water in other areas. If your vessel has only operated under D-2, i.e. with water treated in BWTS no cleaning of tanks is required.

## How do you demonstrate clean tanks?

There is no guidance in BWMC or its guidelines for clean tanks. Contact the authorities for clarification. It may be sufficient to use the D-1 exchange as an interim measure for clean tanks.

**What happens if vessel heads for docking or temporarily operation elsewhere?**

You will have to comply with the D-1 or D-2 standard as appropriate. You may apply an “other method” compliant with D-2, e.g. municipal public water or a recognised cleaning facility.