



UNIFORM NATIONAL DISCHARGE STANDARDS (UNDS) FOR VESSELS OF THE ARMED FORCES

Section 312(n) of the Clean Water Act was added in 1996 to establish the Uniform National Discharge Standards (UNDS).

WHAT IS UNDS?

- Section 312(n) of the Clean Water Act requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) to establish uniform national discharge standards to control discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel of the Armed Forces. The discharge standards are intended to reduce the adverse environmental impacts associated with the discharges, stimulate the development of improved pollution control devices, and advance the development of environmentally sound ships by the military. UNDS is being implemented in three phases through a partnership between the EPA and DoD.
- Phase I (completed May 1999) identified and characterized 39 discharges; 25 of the discharges were determined to require control using a marine pollution control device (MPCD). A MPCD is any equipment, material substitution, or management practice designed to treat, retain, or control discharges from a vessel of the Armed Forces.
- Phase II (underway) will establish performance standards to control the 25 discharges in three separate batch rulemakings. The EPA and DoD, in consultation with the U.S. Coast Guard, are working together to develop MPCD performance standards for the discharges.
 - Batch One: aqueous film forming foam, chain locker effluent, distillation and reverse osmosis brine, elevator pit effluent, gas turbine water wash, non-oily machinery wastewater, photographic laboratory drains, seawater cooling overboard discharge, seawater piping biofouling prevention, small boat engine wet exhaust, and weldeck discharges.
 - Batch Two: catapult water brake tank & post-launch retraction exhaust, controllable pitch propeller hydraulic fluid, deck runoff, firemain systems, graywater, hull coating leachate, motor gasoline compensating discharge, sonar dome discharge, submarine bilgewater, surface vessel bilgewater/oil-water separator, and underwater ship husbandry.
 - Batch Three: clean ballast, dirty ballast, and compensated fuel ballast.
- Phase III will establish regulations governing the design, construction, installation, and use of MPCDs to meet the discharge standards established in Phase II.

WHAT VESSELS ARE REGULATED?

- UNDS applies to discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel of the Armed Forces (i.e., Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Military Sealift Command, and U.S. Coast Guard vessels).
- UNDS applies to discharges in waters of the United States and extend seaward out to 12 nautical miles from the coastline.
- UNDS does not apply to discharges from Army Corps of Engineers vessels, Maritime Administration vessels, memorial and museum vessels, time- and voyage-chartered vessels, vessels under construction, vessels in dry dock, vessels owned and operated by state or tribal entities, commercial vessels, private vessels, and amphibious vehicles.

HOW WILL UNDS AFFECT STATES?

- Clean Water Act Section 312(n) prohibits states from regulating the discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel of the Armed Forces once a determination is made by the EPA and DoD that a discharge does not require the use of a MPCD (Phase I) or once implementing regulations have been established by DoD for a discharge that does require the use of a MPCD (Phase III).
- The statute allows states to petition the EPA and DoD to review the determinations made under Phase I and the MPCD performance standards established under Phase II.
- The statute also enables a state to petition the EPA to establish No-Discharge Zones for a discharge incidental to the normal operation of a vessel of the Armed Forces.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT UNDS

- Visit our UNDS website at <http://www.epa.gov/vessels-marinas-and-ports/uniform-national-discharge-standards-unds-homepage>
- Contact Katherine Weiler in the Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds at 202-566-1280.

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