

Cargo ships discharge part of their waste into the Baltic Sea - information on waste services is now brought directly to ships

A significant number of cargo ships in the Baltic Sea discharge part of their waste directly into the sea, completely legally, even though this waste is known to eutrophicate the Baltic Sea. In particular, cargo ships are not aware of the special conditions in the Baltic Sea and of the No Special Fee payment system at Baltic ports, where a waste fee is charged regardless of whether the ship leaves waste in the port or not. The Baltic Sea Waste Fee -info, initiated by the Baltic Sea Action Group and created in cooperation with the Finnish maritime cluster, provides information on the ease of discharging waste to ports, directly to ships.

"A survey conducted by members of BSAG and the Shipbrokers' Association revealed that voluntary actions are needed as soon as possible to reduce eutrophic discharges into the Baltic Sea," says **Elisa Mikkolainen**, Baltic Sea Action Group's maritime Project Director, and continues: "BSAG assembled a team to disseminate information more efficiently on the specific conditions of the Baltic Sea and responsible waste management for all the 2000 ships sailing daily in the Baltic Sea. The information package aims to get all ships to discharge all their waste into port reception facilities and thus reduce discharges from shipping in the Baltic Sea."

"Traficom wants to participate in raising awareness, especially in ships that visit Finnish ports less often," says the Head of the Marine Environment team **Mirja Ikonen** from Traficom and adds: "The information package aims to encourage ships to deliver to port reception facilities also the types of waste that are still allowed to be legally discharged into the Baltic Sea".

Sewage causes unnecessary burden to the Baltic Sea

International regulations define the Baltic Sea as both a special area and a particularly sensitive sea area. The Baltic Sea therefore has special regulations governing shipping, which are stricter than in many other sea areas. However, under certain conditions, vessels may discharge into the sea, for example, wastewater, treated sewage and ground food waste. Waste waters and food waste entering the sea from ships put a strain on the Baltic Sea and [exacerbate eutrophication and oxygen deficiency](#).

Finnish maritime operators co-operate for the benefit of the Baltic Sea

Good cooperation has been a driving force in promoting responsible shipping. The Baltic Sea Waste Fee -info was created, among BSAG, by the Finnish Port Association, the Shipbrokers Finland, the Finnish Shipowners' Association, the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Finland.

"The compact information package contains information on the NSF system, which types of waste are covered by the mandatory waste fee and where a separate fee should be paid. The information package also contains links to port waste management arrangements and information on the special features of marine nature", says **Kirsti Tarnanen-Sariola**, Deputy Director of the Finnish Port Association. "The goal of ports is to make it as easy as possible to leave waste in ports. In addition, ships can find the information package on the ports' websites", continues Tarnanen-Sariola.

"As a provider of Vessel Traffic Service, we share information package to ships moving in Finland's national sea areas and international sea areas in the Gulf of Finland. We are very excited to be part of this project," says Quality & Environment Manager, **Kati Westerlund** from Fintraffic.

"Finnish shipbrokers and agents deliver the information package to ships and at the same time contribute on their part to reduce discharges into the Baltic Sea. The information package is a great tool for both ships and shipowners", states General Manager **Sari Turkkila** from Shipbrokers Finland. In addition, BSAG is marketing the information package in the Responsible Shipping project.

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Photos and materials on Baltic Sea Waste Fee -info: www.bsag.fi/en/mediamaterials/

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