



Notice to Industry

21/2010

## Changes to import conditions for used vessels with timber in their construction and fit-outs

### Who is affected by this notice?

This information applies to all owners of vessels and brokers representing owners of vessels where the vessels have timber used in their construction and are either imported into Australia as cargo, or sailed/towed in to Australian waters (including returning Australian vessels) that are subsequently imported or re-imported.

### Background

A range of risk management strategies are being implemented by AQIS for used vessels entering Australia, either sailed in or imported as cargo, to ensure that the identified quarantine risk of exotic termites and other timber pests entering Australia via this pathway is addressed. The import conditions for used vessels with timber in their construction and/or fit-outs have now been revised and rationalised to ensure national consistency in import conditions between vessels arriving as cargo and vessels sailed in to Australian waters.

The new importation conditions will apply from 1 July 2010 and will be documented in the 'Boats and Yachts with timber components' Import Conditions Database (ICON) case when published on the AQIS website.

### What has changed?

From 1 July 2010 all used vessels arriving in Australia (either as cargo or sailed in) will be assessed as either low risk or high risk for timber pests and diseases exotic to Australia. This policy replaces the previous Category 1, 2 and 3 inspection processes and offshore fumigation certification is no longer being accepted as an alternative to this on arrival assessment process.

Each consignment must be accompanied by sufficient documentation to allow AQIS to determine the vessel's age, country of manufacture, construction, former location/s, and travel and treatment history. Vessels arriving without the required documentation and/or vessel history will automatically be regarded as high risk vessels.

**Low risk vessels** are those with minimal timber in their construction and fit-outs OR if more than minimal timber NOT manufactured/re-fitted in a high risk country AND has not spent three or more months (cumulative) in high risk countries. As examples, AQIS considers that vessels with minimal timber in construction and fit-out may include (but are not restricted to):

- vessels generally with fibreglass, composite or steel hulls and non timber masts
- internal fit-outs that are mainly with Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF) or particle board or other composite timber like products, with solid timber only being used in trims.

Each consignment of low risk vessels must be free from quarantine risk material including soil, animal material, live insects, live animals, snails, plant material, bark, food refuse, seeds, moulds and other fungi.

For vessels imported as cargo any packaging used with the consignment must be clean and new. Any containers, timber packing, pallets or dunnage will be subject to inspection and treatment on arrival unless certified as having been treated by an AQIS approved method (Refer to the AQIS publication 'Cargo Containers: Quarantine aspects and procedures').

**High risk vessels** are those with more than minimal timber in construction and fit-out (e.g. beams, bearers, hull, decking, railings, cabins and/or masts) AND either manufactured/re-fitted OR spent three or more months (cumulative) in high risk countries. As examples, AQIS considers high risk vessels to include (but are not restricted to):

- older style yachts or other vessels with timber masts and timber hulls
- some fibreglass hulled vessels with extensive solid timber and/or marine ply fit-outs internally (such as solid timber and ply framing used under flooring, ceilings and some walls).

The quarantine risk is due to the construction, refit and travel history, the amount of timber on board, the complexity of construction and limited access for timber inspections. In addition to meeting the low risk import requirements outlined above, high risk vessels are now required to undergo a timber inspection. The nature and type of inspection required will be determined by AQIS on the documents presented on arrival and will be assessed according to the complexity of the vessel.

### **What timber inspection will be required for vessels assessed as high risk?**

Depending on the risk assessment, the vessel may require:

1. timber vessel inspection by an AQIS Accredited Timber Vessel Inspector
2. timber vessel inspection by an AQIS preferred supplier of termite detector dog services, with or without an AQIS Accredited Timber Quarantine Inspector or AQIS Entomologist in attendance
3. timber vessel inspection by an AQIS preferred supplier using a termite detection device (e.g. Termatrac®) with an AQIS Accredited Timber Vessel Inspector or AQIS Entomologist in attendance.

Due to the difficulties involved in locating burrowing timber pests, owners of vessels assessed as high risk should be aware that more than one inspection may be required to resolve the quarantine risk, depending on the complexity of the vessel. The AQIS Accredited Timber Vessel Inspector may need to authorise the use of termite detector dogs. If termite detector dogs are unavailable then alternative AQIS approved termite detection devices may be used if visibility is reduced or restricted or if there is a potential quarantine risk detected or suspected within the structure of the vessel on initial inspection.

### **Vessels sailed in to Australia, including international and returning Australian vessels**

These vessels are subject to pratique inspection on arrival. Note that the *Quarantine Act 1908* and subsequent proclamations do not distinguish between international or returning Australian vessels/goods. All are required to meet the same AQIS requirements regardless of origin and the

conditions outlined in the ICON case will also apply to all vessels sailed in that are subsequently imported. The vessels sailed in that are assessed by accredited AQIS seaports officers at that initial pratique inspection as representing a low risk (on the same criteria as outlined above) will usually not require a further timber inspection for importation.

Any evidence of insect infestation will require immediate AQIS intervention which may include treatment at the owner's expense. AQIS timber inspections and alternative technologies for detecting timber pests are not available at all ports and timber inspections will only be carried out in safe conditions, in day light and in normal office hours. As owners are responsible for the cost of all inspections and any treatments required by AQIS to resolve the quarantine status of the vessel, to contain inspection costs to a minimum the vessels should be presented for inspection at proclaimed ports when and where AQIS accredited timber vessel inspectors are available.

Finally, owners of sailed in vessels should be aware that the position of their yacht in Australian waters may be tracked through the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service and penalties may apply for vessels that are not presented for timber inspections if and when directed by an AQIS officer. If sailed in yachts are to remain within Australian waters after the 12 month cruising permit expires, and have been assessed as high risk at initial inspection and do not intend to import, then these vessels will need to undergo a timber vessel inspection (as outlined above for vessels being imported) before the expiration of the 12 month cruising permit.

**Implementation Date:**

These changes are to be implemented from 1 July 2010.

**Further information?**

For further information on the importation of used vessels with timber components please contact the Sea Cargo Program by e-mail at [sea.cargo@aqis.gov.au](mailto:sea.cargo@aqis.gov.au), or freecall 1800 020 504 (within Australia) or +61 2 6272 3933.