

# MARPOL

<b>Official reference</b>	International Convention for the prevention of pollution from ships	
<b>Official website</b>	www.imo.org	
<b>Relevant dates</b>	Document 1973	2/11/1973
	Document Protocol 1978 (MARPOL 73/78)	17/02/1978
	Entry into force	2/10/1983
	Ratification by Belgium	17/01/1984
	Document Protocol 1997	26/09/1997
	Entry into force	19/05/2005
	Ratification by Belgium	15/06/2004
	Ratification by Flanders	23/12/2005
<b>Policy level</b>	International	
<b>Type of instrument</b>	Convention	
<b>Geographical reach</b>	World seas	
<b>(Legal) coverage in the BNS</b>	Internal waters, territorial sea, exclusive economic zone	
<b>International contact point</b>	International Maritime Organization (IMO)	
<b>Federal ratification</b>	<p>Wet van 17 januari 1984 houdende goedkeuring van volgende Internationale Akten: - a) Internationaal Verdrag van 1973 ter voorkoming van verontreiniging door schepen, en Bijlagen, opgemaakt te Londen op 2 november 1973, - b) Protocol van 1978 bij het Internationaal Verdrag van 1973 ter voorkoming van verontreiniging door schepen, en Bijlage, opgemaakt te Londen op 17 februari 1978</p> <p>Protocol: Wet van 15 juni 2004 houdende instemming met het Protocol van 1997 tot wijziging van het Internationaal Verdrag ter voorkoming van verontreiniging door schepen, 1973, zoals gewijzigd door het Protocol van 1978, en met de Bijlage, gedaan te Londen op 26 september 1997</p>	
<b>Flemish ratification</b>	<p>Protocol: Decreet van 23 december 2005 houdende instemming met het Protocol van 1997 tot wijziging van het Internationaal Verdrag ter voorkoming van verontreiniging door schepen, MARPOL 1973, zoals gewijzigd door het Protocol daarbij van 1978</p>	

## // abstract:

MARPOL 73/78 is the main convention created in order to prevent marine pollution by ships. It applies to both operational (e.g. cargo residues, fuel and lubricating oil residues, sewage, garbage, air pollution) and accidental pollution. The 1978 Protocol was adopted in the context of numerous oil tanker accidents in the 1976-1977 period. In 1997, a new Protocol was adopted that amended the convention and added Annex VI.

The convention consists of some general articles, that describe, inter alia, the general obligations of the Contracting Parties and the enforcement powers. The dumping prescriptions and the technical requirements are established in six separate annexes:

- Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Oil;
- Regulations for the Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk;
- Prevention of Pollution by Harmful Substances Carried by Sea in Packaged Form;
- Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships;
- Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships;
- Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships.

In the case of operational dumping, the pollution is limited through set discharge criteria (or a discharge ban) that determine, inter alia, the concentration of the mixture, or the maximum amount. The annexes include some general exceptions to the discharge criteria, this is (1) in case of force majeure (2) when the discharge results from damage (3) when the discharge took place in the context of pollution control. In addition, technical solutions can be opted for that limit the need for operational discharges. In the context of accidents, the convention demands that special attention is paid to the design, staff, construction and equipment requirement in order to limit the possible damages.