



National Guidance: Best Management Practices for Preparing Vessels Intended to Create Artificial Reefs

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing national guidance on environmental best management practices for preparing vessels for use as artificial reefs. The first of its kind, this guidance offers a consistent, national approach for preparing obsolete and decommissioned military and commercial vessels for use as artificial reefs.

Background

Section 3516 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 requires that EPA and the Maritime Administration (MARAD) jointly develop guidance recommending environmental best management practices (BMPs) to be used in the preparation of vessels for use as artificial reefs.

Options for managing obsolete and decommissioned military and commercial vessels include re-use of the vessel or parts of the vessel, recycling or scrapping, creating artificial reefs, and disposal on land or at sea. This document discusses the clean-up and preparation of such vessels when sinking obsolete vessels to create artificial reefs.

An interagency workgroup, chaired by EPA's Office of Water, was established to develop the guidance. The workgroup included representatives from the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, MARAD, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This final guidance document addresses the public comments received on the *Draft National Guidance: Best Management Practices for Preparing Vessels Intended to Create Artificial Reefs* (69 FR 46141), as well as lessons learned from the Navy's ex-USS Oriskany vessel-to-reef project.

Summary of Guidance

The BMP guidance identifies materials or categories of materials of concern that may be present aboard vessels, identifies where these materials may be found, and describes their potential adverse impacts if released into the marine environment. The materials of concern include: fuels and oil, asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), paints, debris (e.g., vessel debris, floatables, and introduced material), and other materials (e.g., mercury, refrigerants). For each material or category of material of concern identified, this document provides a general clean-up performance goal and information on methods for addressing those goals.

The purpose of creating an artificial reef is to benefit the environment by enhancing aquatic habitat and marine resources, as well as providing an option for conserving, managing, and for developing fisheries resources.

EPA believes that achieving the clean-up performance goals provided in this document, if complemented with strategic reef site selection, will maximize the opportunity for these vessels to benefit the environment as artificial reefs.

Further Information

For additional information call Laura S. Johnson at (202) 566-1273; or send an e-mail to johnson.laura-s@epa.gov. You can view or download the guidance at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/oceans/habitat/artificialreefs/index.html>.