



‘Flush’ away the deficiency!

#1# Real Case: Recently, it has been reported that a cargo vessel faced difficulties in Antwerp, Belgium when during its cargo operations, Port State Control Officers boarded the vessel for a detailed PSC inspection. Amongst other findings, **the sewage treatment plant was found to be malfunctioning due to clogged return line**, resulting in the vessel’s detention.

Under the revised **Annex IV** of the MARPOL Convention, discharges of sewage or "blackwater" are prohibited except for specific conditions stipulated under this Annex. In addition to international standards, as established under MARPOL Annex IV, some jurisdictions also regulate sewage discharges. For example, in the United States, specific waters are designated as "no discharge zones" or NDZs which means sewage discharges are prohibited in these areas.

Seagoing ships of 400 gross tonnage and above, or ships which are certified to carry more than 15 persons, have to be fitted with an approved **sewage treatment plant, or sewage comminuting and disinfecting system, or sewage holding tank** to control the discharge of sewage into the sea.

Sewage on board ships needs to be treated before being discharged into the sea. The condition and operation of sewage treatment plant or sewage comminuting and disinfecting systems is of paramount importance, as a number of ships have been identified with deficiencies related to their sewage plant or detained by PSC when the required equipment was found to be not in compliant or in an unsatisfactory operating condition.

Prevention at Sea lists below some of the most commonly imposed deficiencies related to sewage systems highlighting the importance of the good working order of graywater and sewage systems, especially when the vessel is operating in special areas or during its stay at Port;

Recurring PSC deficiencies (Grounds for Detention)	Making PREVENTION, a Habit!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewage treatment plant not in use while in port. • Sewage treatment plant not in use with untreated sewage going over side. Sewage three – way valve found seized in overboard position. • Sewage treatment plant found not functional, inability to demonstrate and/or test. • Sewage discharge pipe found leaking. • Sewage discharged into the sea directly when the ship was alongside at berth without passing through the sewage treatment plant 	<p>Masters, Operators and Managers are reminded that any malfunction of the equipment or noncompliance with the approved drawings may result in an invalid international Sewage Pollution Prevention Certificate and, as such, is a violation of MARPOL, Annex IV.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Any malfunction or non-compliance should be reported to the vessel’s Recognized Organization and/or the Maritime Administrator at the earliest opportunity and actions to prevent untreated sewage being discharged overboard into the marine environment should be taken immediately. ✓ Ensure the crew are familiar with the operation and maintenance of the graywater and sewage systems. ✓ In case of a blockage of the sewage line there is a connection for back flushing which uses sea water. This is to be used to unclog the sewage pipelines; however, it is to note that all valves are closed and only the necessary valves are open, for it might back flush from WC of the cabins.



Use color liquid to test if there is any outflow from the sewage system - Discharge color liquid through the WCs and observe if same appears in the outflow.

Don’t cure, prevent! For more information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

