



AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION NOTICE NO. 2011/15

Processing maritime cargo vessels arriving from Japan

This notice is being issued in response to requests for further information following the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan. In particular, questions have been raised about potential risks associated with radiological contamination of maritime vessels arriving from Japan.

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) and the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing are closely monitoring and assessing the situation, including the potential exposure to radiation of people, goods, fresh produce and vessels travelling from Japan to Australia.

Australian Customs Notice 2011/13 provides information on the current situation with respect to processing international mail, sea and air cargo, and aircraft, and is available at:

http://www.customs.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/ACN2011-13_processing_goods_and_passengers_from_Japan.pdf

At this point in time it is not considered necessary to introduce any radiation screening measures for mail, sea or air cargo, or aircraft arriving from Japan.

However, as a precautionary measure, FSANZ has requested that the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) tests certain fresh or frozen foods originating from the Japanese prefectures of Fukushima, Gunma, Ibaraki, Chiba and Tochigi. These foods will be referred to AQIS for testing. Foods that pass testing will be released; foods that fail must be re-exported or destroyed.

Maritime vessels arriving from Japan

Recent media articles have reported that various international container shipping lines have restricted or barred their ships from calling on ports in Tokyo Bay and Yokohama because of concerns about radiation from the damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant.

There have also been reports of a Japanese container ship being turned away from China due to the detection of high levels of radiation, and the scanning and checking of vessels from Japan, by authorities in the USA.

The Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism is monitoring radiation levels at the Tokyo, Yokohama, Kawasaki and Chiba ports. ARPANSA and other national and international bodies are also independently assessing measurements taken across Japan, on a regular basis.

ARPANSA has advised Customs and Border Protection that measured radiation levels at these ports to date have been close to typical levels of background radiation.

Further information on measured doses at ports is available from www.mlit.go.jp/en/index.html or the International Maritime Organization at www.imo.org

Cautionary Evacuation Zone

As a precautionary measure, ARPANSA and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) have reminded shipping lines that the cautionary evacuation zone promulgated by ARPANSA should also be applied to ships transiting the area.

Vessels should avoid transiting within 43 nautical miles (80km) of the Fukushima nuclear power plant (37-19N 141-01E). Mariners are advised that this recommendation should be considered a minimum distance, and that prudent route planning should incorporate prevailing and changing wind and weather conditions, in addition to other precautionary measures.

The cautionary evacuation zone should be observed until further notice, and vessels should note any NAVAREA warnings and advice.

In the event a vessel bound for an Australian port transits through the 43 nautical miles (80km) cautionary evacuation area, it is requested the vessel's master submit transit information, including the date and total time within the cautionary area, to ARPANSA. Such reports should be submitted via the AMSA incident reporting system.

Further details are available at www.amsa.gov.au/Shipping_Safety/Incident_Reporting

Ballast water

At this stage, normal ballast water arrangements remain in place, as current water exchange requirements will act to minimise any risk. ***No additional precautions are required in respect of ballast water, at this stage.***

Ongoing monitoring

Customs and Border Protection is working closely with ARPANSA and other Government agencies to monitor the current situation.

Stakeholders will be advised if there is any change to current advice.

Further information can be obtained from the [ARPANSA website](http://www.arpansa.gov.au).

(signed)
Raelene Vivian
National Director
Cargo Division
5 April 2011