Sewage and Wastewater Treatment — study guide

A ship's sewage plant protects the sea, and it is watched closely by Port State Control. This guide covers the regulation, the treatment steps and the warning signs.[1]

Regulation

The details of the sewage discharge regulations can be found in **MARPOL Annex IV**.

What Port State Control may check

Among other things, a Port State Control inspection may check that all crew members know the international and local regulations; the chlorine content in the effluent; that the sewage treatment plant is being operated correctly by the ship's crew; and the validity of the **International Sewage Pollution Prevention Certificate**.

The treatment process

The final step in the treatment process is the **disinfection of effluent** using chemicals or ultraviolet light in the contact tank.

Good practice and warning signs

To reduce the risk of fire, cigarette butts should **not** be flushed down the toilet. An indicator that the tank is turning **anaerobic** is a foul smell similar to rotten eggs — a sign the treatment process is not working as it should.

Key facts to remember

- MARPOL Annex IV covers sewage discharge regulations.
- PSC may check crew knowledge, effluent chlorine content, correct operation of the plant, and the International Sewage Pollution Prevention Certificate.
- Final step: disinfection of effluent by chemicals or UV light in the contact tank.
- Never flush cigarette butts down the toilet (fire risk).
- Rotten-egg smell = the tank is turning anaerobic.

Sources

1. IMO MARPOL Annex IV — Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships.

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