

China - Discharge of Garbage and Sewage in the Bohai Sea

28th January 2016

An entered vessel was recently fined USD 8,500 for disposing of garbage within the Bohai Sea.

Vessels sometimes assume that China's territorial waters within the Bohai Sea extend 12 nautical miles from the coast. However, this is not the case as in 1958 the Chinese government declared the entire Bohai Sea to be inland waters. Now that pollution levels in the Bohai Sea are increasing, the Chinese Maritime Safety Administration (MSA) has started to enforce more rigorously the Chinese garbage and sewage disposal regulations, the provisions of which are broadly in line with MARPOL requirements.

Fines, reportedly amounting to up to USD 30,000, have been imposed on vessels for disposing of garbage and/or sewage within the Bohai Sea, and for not maintaining proper garbage and/or sewage disposal records.

The baselines from which the territorial sea extends to the East, and the inland waters extend to the West, connect the land to the North and South of the Bohai Strait via the numerous islands lying within the Strait. As the exact co-ordinates of the points connecting these baselines are not publicly available, vessels should consider that the baseline runs straight across the Bohai Strait, joining the following two points, which will give a conservative estimation of the extent of the inland waters and adjacent territorial sea:

- 38° 43.6' N; 121° 08.2' E
- 37° 49.9' N; 120° 44.8' E

In order to avoid possible fines, vessels are advised not to dispose of any garbage or sewage within the Bohai Sea or the adjacent territorial sea.

Members requiring further guidance should contact the [Loss Prevention department](#).

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