

MARPOL AT 50- OUR COMMITMENT GOES ON

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The world's maritime community gathers to commemorate World maritime Day on September 28 every year. This day gives us a chance to consider the value of the maritime sector and how it affects our daily lives. World Maritime Day in 2023 will be especially significant because MARPOL, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, will be 50 years old. This year's World Maritime Day is being observed under the theme "**MARPOL at 50: Our Commitment Goes On**" which recognizes the crucial role MARPOL has played in preserving our oceans and marine ecosystems.

The international marine community realized in 1973 that it was necessary to address the effects that shipping activities were having on the environment. MARPOL was created as a response to oil spills, air pollution, and marine pollution brought on by ships. The International Maritime Organization (IMO), which established this historic treaty, aimed to create extensive laws to prevent and regulate pollution from ships.

In order to handle new environmental concerns, MARPOL has changed over the past 50 years and included a number of amendments and annexes. It has evolved into the main international framework for policing the disposal of hazardous materials into the ocean, the control of trash generated by ships, and the lowering of ship-generated air pollutants.

The importance of MARPOL cannot be overemphasized. It has been crucial in minimizing the maritime sector's environmental impact. Its significant accomplishments include, Annex I of MARPOL establishes strict guidelines for the discharge of oil and oily mixtures, reducing the likelihood of oil spills. The Oil Record Book, a requirement for MARPOL compliance, makes sure that ships keep accurate records of all actions involving oil. Annexes II, III, and IV govern the discharge of hazardous liquids, packaged hazardous substances, and sewage. These rules shield ecosystems and marine life from harmful

substances. By restricting the sulfur content of fuels, controlling nitrogen oxides (NOx), and encouraging the use of cleaner technologies, Annex VI has played a crucial role in lowering hazardous emissions from ships. MARPOL regulates how garbage produced by ships, especially plastics, is disposed of. As part of the effort to combat marine litter, Annex V places restrictions on the disposal of trash into the ocean. MARPOL has now addressed the issue of invasive species transferred in ballast water, which can harm local ecosystems, thanks to the Ballast Water Management Convention.

It is crucial to acknowledge the advancements made in protecting our oceans as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of MARPOL. The journey is still far from over, though. The maritime community has to recommit to addressing new issues like climate change, reducing contaminants, and the need for sustainable shipping. MARPOL is essential to ensure a sustainable and carbon-neutral marine economy because it supports the IMO's ambitious goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions from ships by at least 50% by 2050. MARPOL will continue to change to incorporate new technologies and fuels that cut pollution, including biofuels, hydrogen, and ammonia. The problem of plastics in our oceans continues to be a serious issue. Further governing the handling and disposal of plastics on ships may be possible with the help of MARPOL.

The use of digital technology, such as real-time monitoring and computerized record-keeping, can improve MARPOL compliance and ease administrative responsibilities. Proper execution of MARPOL's regulations depends on the knowledge of seafarers, ship-owners, and maritime stakeholders. As we commemorate MARPOL's 50th anniversary on this World Maritime Day, it serves as a reminder that we must remain committed to safeguarding our seas and marine life. To achieve a sustainable and environmentally responsible future, the maritime sector is crucial. By embracing new technologies, rules, and environmentally friendly procedures, we can guarantee that MARPOL's legacy advances and leaves a cleaner, healthier sea environment for future generations.