

Federal Sewage Regulation (especially for liveaboards)

CANADA SHIPPING ACT, 2001, Registration 2012-03-3, Vessel Pollution and Dangerous Chemicals Regulations

Section 119 of the regulations requires a ship that has a toilet on board to have a holding tank or an approved marine sanitation device. **With some exceptions, the discharge of untreated sewage into all Canadian inland waters and Canadian coastal waters within 3 nautical miles of land (ships less than 400 tons) is banned.** Treated sewage will only be allowed to be discharged into Canadian waters subject to specified limits of fecal coliforms per 100 ml of water. Adoption of these requirements will permit Canada to accede to Annex IV of the Pollution Convention.

In summary, the new regs allow no sewage discharge of any kind in any waters within one mile of any shore. Discharge of raw sewage in salt water is permitted if the vessel is greater than three miles from any shore. This allows overboard discharge, for example, into the middle of the Strait of Georgia.

For vessels in restricted waters where there is not sufficient distance between shores, and where there is no pump-out alternative, an exemption allows overboard discharge, as long as it is on an ebb tide, the vessel is in the deepest possible water and it is making its maximum cruising speed in excess of four knots. Overriding this exemption is the caveat that no solid waste can be found on a shoreline, nor can there be any surface sheen resulting from such a discharge.