

EPA proposes discharge standards for boats, vessels

July 17 -- The U.S. EPA is proposing two general permits under the Clean Water Act that will cover discharges incidental to normal operation of commercial and recreational vessels.

The change could impact as many as 91,000 commercial vessels and about 13 million recreational boats, according to agency estimates.

As a result of a court ruling currently under appeal, vessel owners or operators whose discharges have previously been exempt from Clean Water Act requirements for the last 35 years will be required a permit as of Sept. 30, 2008. The EPA is proposing control technologies and management practices that enhance environmental protection and are practical to implement.

The commercial and large recreational vessel general permit (VGP) would cover all commercial vessels and recreational vessels 79 feet or longer. It would incorporate the Coast Guard mandatory ballast water management and exchange standards and have supplemental ballast water requirements.

The permit for smaller recreational vessels measuring less than 79 feet in length contains simpler provisions.

Additional information is available online at www.epa.gov/npdes/vessels.

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