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US EPA and Coast Guard to enforce ECA requirements
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The **US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** and the **US Coast Guard (USCG)** have agreed to jointly enforce US and international air pollution requirements for vessels operating in US waters.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed by EPA and the USCG stated that they will perform inspections and investigations, and will take appropriate enforcement actions if a violation is detected.

The MOU applies to **MARPOL Annex VI**, and the forthcoming **North American emission control area (ECA)**.

The US became a party to MARPOL Annex VI in 2008 and the treaty is implemented in the US through the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships (APPS).

"Today's agreement forges a strong partnership between EPA and the US Coast Guard, advancing our shared commitment to enforce air emissions standards for ships operating in US waters," said Cynthia Giles, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.

"Reducing harmful air pollution is a priority for EPA and by working with the Coast Guard we will ensure that the ships moving through our waters meet their environmental obligations, protecting our nation's air quality and the health of our coastal communities."

The efforts to ensure compliance with Annex VI include oversight of marine fuelling facilities, on board compliance inspections and record reviews.

"This agreement demonstrates the Coast Guard's long-standing commitment to protecting our nation's marine environment," said Rear Adm. Kevin Cook, director of Prevention Policy for the US Coast Guard.

"Aligning our capabilities with EPA enhances our commitment to the marine environment, while minimising the impact on shipping."

The large marine diesel engines that provide propulsion and auxiliary power on many ocean-going vessels emit significant amounts of pollution.

EPA estimates that without further action, by 2030, nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions from ships will more than double, growing to 2.1 million tonnes per year.

The USCG and the EPA have sent a letter to industry to inform them about the measures that will be taking place to promote compliance with federal and international air pollution requirements. The signed letter stated that they will be actively pursuing violations.

Natalie Bruckner-Menchelli, Vancouver News Desk, 27th June 2011 21:37 GMT
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US Coast Guard will take appropriate enforcement actions (photo courtesy of Mike Baird)