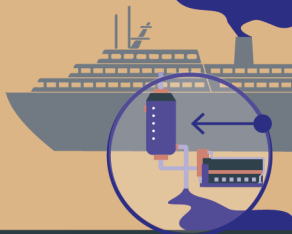


Scrubber waste discharge from ships is toxic to the marine environment



From January 2020, the allowable sulphur content of marine fuels has decreased from 4.5% to 0.5%. Ships burning high sulphur heavy fuel oils (HFO) can use exhaust gas cleaning systems or “scrubbers” to remove excess sulphur to comply with the new sulphur standard.

Scrubbers turn an air pollution problem into an ocean pollution problem. How does it work?



Scrubbers neutralize the acidic exhaust gases, created when burning HFO, by mixing them with alkaline scrubbing material and remove pollutants such as sulphur.



Scrubber waste contains heavy metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, which accumulate in the environment, have carcinogenic effects, can cause mutations, and impact marine life.



Scrubbers are not efficient at removing small sulphur particles from the exhaust gas which pose a significant risk to human health.



Scrubber waste discharge is warmer and more acidic than the surrounding water and increasing acidity makes toxic heavy metals more bioavailable to wildlife.



Using scrubbers slows down efforts to transition to cleaner fuels and creates a new marine pollution problem. Several countries have restricted the discharge of scrubber waste in ports and coastal waters. Scrubbers should be banned immediately in the Arctic and in other sensitive areas and phased-out globally.

