

Heading: DG Shipping Revises Vessel Age Criteria, Gives 3-Year Compliance Window

The Directorate General of Shipping will give fleet owners three more years from the earlier stipulated February 2026 deadline to meet the age norms for existing ships but deferred a plan to introduce a sustainability indexing mechanism that potentially allows a further two years' time for compliance. All 'Existing Vessels' regardless of the age, affected by the maximum age prescribed, will be allowed to operate up to three years from the date of the order, the country's maritime regulator had said while issuing the February 24, 2023, order.

"The sustainability indexing has been deferred because it requires more discussion," said a government official. "It will be issued separately after undertaking wider stakeholder consultations. Further extension of time beyond March 2029 for compliance with the age norms will be based on the requirement of time to meet sustainability indexing," the official added.

IIM Indore report backs entry age criteria

The IIM Indore report has backed the entry age criteria towards fleet modernisation. Besides, it recommended some criteria for considering the exit age such as dispensation for certain specialised and complex vessels of higher cost and lesser availability, granting further time towards replacement planning due to economic impact and market shortage of vessels and imposing certain regulatory criteria based on International Maritime Organisation (IMO) goals for exit instead of only age.

The entry age for second hand oil tankers, bulk carriers and general cargo vessels into the Indian registry has been set at 20 years and they can be run till 25 years.

For offshore fleet, the entry age has been set at 20 years which will be allowed to run till 25 years, except for DP2 vessels which can ply for 30 years.

The entry and exit age for exclusive container and cement carriers into the Indian registry has been set at 20 and 30 years respectively.

In the case of gas and chemical carriers, the entry and exit age will be 25 and 30 years, respectively.

For harbour tugs operating within a harbour/port, the entry and exit ages are set at 20 and 30 years, respectively,

The DG Shipping said that the average age of the world fleet has been declining while the same is increasing for Indian tonnage, underscoring an urgent need to modernise the Indian fleet.