



Circular

STAND READY FOR THE FLIGHTED SPONGY MOTH COMPLEX (FSMC) SEASON

JUNE 2025

The Flighted Spongy Moth Complex (FSMC)* is an invasive forest species originating from North China, Russian Far East, Korea and Japan. Formerly known as Asian Gypsy Moth (AGM), the FSMC is known to spread via ocean-going vessels involved in international trade, and thus becoming dangerous hitchhikers. This species is attracted to bright lights, and the female moths often lay their eggs on a vessel's superstructure. These egg masses will then be carried from one port to another. When the eggs hatch, the hungry caterpillars completely defoliate trees, leaving them susceptible to disease and other pests. This creates a seasonal problem in certain geographical areas where such forest pests are not indigenous. With this circular MSIG Specialty Marine wishes to provide an update of the various restrictions in force. Their aim is to prevent the spread of FSMC as it may cause harm to the local bio and eco systems.

* This common designation includes various subspecies such as *Lymantria dispar asiatica*, *Lymantria dispar japonica*, *Lymantria albescens*, *Lymantria umbrosa*, *Lymantria postalba*.



The risks

FSMC egg masses are covered with a yellowish scale, resemble a spongy-mass, and are about 40 x 20 mm in size. The masses of eggs can contain between 600 and 1,000 eggs and can remain viable for 2 years. The egg masses are extremely resilient – they will survive almost any weather and temperature as well as any paint or coating applied on to them, and thus they can easily be carried long distances. The egg masses can be found in sheltered locations and protected areas on board, such as the hatch coamings, around light fixtures, superstructures, handrails, tubes, poles, under canvas, behind the walls and doors as well as in protected places such as cracks or cavities. However, egg masses have also been found on mooring lines or on the outside of containers.

The females lay eggs during their flight season, which normally takes place in the period May-October. Females can fly over more than 21 nautical miles, which allows the pest to spread quickly to the mainland. Vessels and cargo, such as containers, are therefore known to facilitate the spread of the forest pest if it is present on board. That is why vessels calling at risk area ports, mainly in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) during the flight season, should be inspected and certified prior to departure.

Countries regulating incoming vessels for FSMC

Vessels that have visited risk areas in the Far East during the specified risk period, can then be subject to local regulatory regimes that are in place in some destination countries. In particular, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the US, Chile, and Argentina have specific restrictions and requirements that apply to vessels that have visited the risk areas where the FSMC originates. In most cases, those vessels will be required to comply with country-specific notification, inspection and certification procedures, which aim at evidencing that the vessels are free of FSMC.

Australia



In Australia, checking cargo, containers and vessels for pests such as the FSMC is entrusted to the [Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry \(DAFF\)](#). It is responsible for an annual surveillance of vessels who have called the risk area during the specified risk period as indicated below. The Department requests vessel masters and crew to remain vigilant for FSMC and advise as soon as possible of any suspected detections. Early detection and accurate reporting of pests prior to arrival assists in managing the risk offshore where possible and minimises the level of intervention by the Department for vessel arrival.

Risk area:	Requirements apply where a vessel has visited:	Specified risk period:
Russian Far East	All ports between 40°N and 60°N latitude and west of 147 °E longitude.	1 July – 30 September

New Zealand



New Zealand's FSMC regulations are issued by the Ministry of Primary Industries ([MPI](#)). The government has formalized its FSMC requirements through the Craft Risk Management Standard for vessels ([link](#)). The operator of a vessel must ensure that it is free of FSMC species when it enters New Zealand territory. If the vessel has visited a risk area in the past 12 months, and that visit took place during a risk period for the risk area, then the vessel must obtain a valid Certificate of Freedom of FSCM. A vessel without a valid Certificate may be inspected to check that it is free from all life stages of the species. A vessel may be required to arrive at specific ports, or at a location at least 4 nautical miles from land for such inspection.

Risk area:	Requirements apply where a vessel has visited:	Specified risk period:
Russian Far East	South of 60°N latitude and west of 147°E longitude (excluding those ports on the Kamchatka Peninsula)	15 June – 15 October
China	North of 31°15'N latitude	1 June – 30 September
Republic of Korea	All ports	1 June – 30 September
Northern Japan	In prefectures of Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima, Akita, Yamagata	15 June – 15 October
Central Japan	In prefectures of Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, Ibaraki, Chiba, Tokyo, Kanagawa, Shizuoka, Aichi, Mie	1 June – 30 September
Southern Japan	In prefectures of Wakayama, Osaka, Kyoto, Hyogo, Tottori, Shimane, Okayama, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Kagawa, Tokushima, Ehime, Kochi, Fukuoka, Oita, Saga, Nagasaki, Miyazaki, Ku-mamoto, Kagoshima	15 May – 31 August
Far Southern Japan	In prefecture of Okinawa	25 May – 30 June

USA and Canada



The USA and Canada have harmonized procedures to guard against the infestation of the FSMC. Although the plant health and agricultural agencies of the USA and Canada are independent and have differences in their legislation, FSMC risk mitigation and exclusion efforts are a joint effort.

Vessels that have called risk areas during the specific risk periods, as outlined in the table below, are subject to the following measures:

1. Vessels should be inspected and obtain pre-departure certification from a recognized certification body. A copy of the certificate, stating that the vessel is free of FSMC life stages, must be forwarded to their US or Canadian agents. The certificate must be issued from at least the last port of call in a regulated area that was visited during the specific risk period; and
2. Vessels must arrive in North American ports free from FSMC. To avoid facing re-routing, being ordered out of port for cleaning and other potential impacts associated with mitigating the risk of entry of FSMC to North America, crew members should perform intensive vessel self-inspections to look for, remove (scrape off) and properly dispose of or destroy all egg masses and other life stages of FSMC on the vessel prior to entering US and Canadian ports; and
3. Vessels must provide two-year port of call data, at least 96 hours prior to arrival in a North American port, to the vessel's US or Canadian agent. The agent is to ensure that this information is provided to US and Canadian officials.

Although the USA and Canada are in full agreement on the requirement for FSMC pre-departure certification and vessels arriving free from all FSMC life forms (egg masses, pupae, adults), due to sovereign regulations and policies, there are differences in port-of-entry processes between the two countries. In the USA, FSMC risks are managed by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service ([APHIS](#)) while, in Canada, the responsible authority is the Canadian Food Inspection Agency ([CFIA](#)). The latest FSMC notice, issued jointly by both agencies, is available [here](#).

Risk area:	Requirements apply where a vessel has visited:	Specified risk period:
Russian Far East	Nakhodka, Ol'ga, Plastun, Pos'yet, Russkiy Island, Slavyanka, Vanino, Vladivostok, Vostochny, Zarubino, Kozmino	15 June – 15 October
People's Republic of China	All ports in northern China, including all ports on or north of 31°15'N latitude	1 June – 30 September
Republic of Korea	All ports	1 June – 30 September
Northern Japan	In prefectures of Akita, Aomori, Fukushima, Hokkaido, Iwate, Miyagi, Yamagata	15 June – 15 October
Central Japan	In prefectures of Aichi, Chiba, Fukui, Ibaraki, Ishikawa, Kanagawa, Mie, Niigata, Shizuoka, Tokyo, Toyama	1 June – 30 September
Southern Japan	In prefectures of Ehime, Fukuoka, Hiroshima, Hyogo, Kagawa, Kagoshima, Kochi, Kumamoto, Kyoto, Miyazaki, Nagasaki, Oita, Okayama, Osaka, Saga, Shimane, Tokushima, Tottori, Wakayama, Yamaguchi	15 May – 31 August
Far Southern Japan	In prefecture of Okinawa	25 May – 30 June



The authority responsible for FSMC regulations is the Chilean Agriculture and Livestock Service (Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero ([SAG](#))).

Chile has issued the FSMC entry requirements in an exempt resolution (in Spanish) – [Resolution 4412/2013](#), which has been amended by [Resolution 8870/2015](#) and [Resolution 8394/2021](#). In addition, SAG has provided also a [poster](#) and a [flyer](#) (in English) with a summary of the applicable requirements.

The requirements will be applied to vessels that arrive from ports located in the North East and Far East Asia, between 60°N and 20°N latitude (see the table below), and those that have docked or remained during the following female flight periods in the last 2 years counted from the moment of the arrival of the vessel at a Chilean port. These vessels must:

1. Obtain a valid pre-departure certificate from a recognised certification body issued at the last port of call in a regulated area, certifying that the vessel is FMSC-free; and
2. Ensure that a copy of the pre-departure certificate together with two years of port of call data is forwarded to the Chilean officials at least 24 hours prior to arrival.
3. Any vessel of risk and not holding a certificate, will be subject to a mandatory inspection during day light specifically for the detection of FSMC.

Risk area:	Requirements apply where a vessel has visited:	Specified risk period:
Russian Far East	All ports	15 June – 15 October
Republic of Korea	All ports	1 June – 30 September
North Korea	All ports	1 June – 30 September
China	All ports	1 June – 30 September
Northern Japan	In prefectures of Aomori, Fukushima, Hokkaido, Iwate, Miyagi	15 June – 15 September
Western Japan	In prefectures of Akita, Ishikawa, Niigata, Toyama, Yamagata	1 June – 30 September
Eastern Japan	In prefectures of Aichi, Chiba, Fukui, Ibaraki, Kanagawa, Mie, Shizuoka, Tokyo	1 June – 30 September
Southern Japan	In prefectures of Ehime, Fukuoka, Hiroshima, Hyogo, Kagawa, Kagoshima, Kochi, Kumamoto, Kyoto, Miyazaki, Nagasaki, Oita, Okayama, Osaka, Saga, Shimane, Tottori, Tokushima, Wakayama, Yamaguchi	15 May – 31 August
Far Southern Japan	In prefecture of Okinawa	25 May – 30 June

Argentina



The Argentinian authorities regulating FSMC is the Argentine National Food Safety and Quality Service (Servicio Nacional De Sanidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria, [SENASA](#)), which has a dedicated [website](#) on the FSMC. Argentina regulates ships coming from Eastern Asia and Russian Far East, that is, ports located between 20°N and 60°N latitude as defined in the table below.

The regulation applies to all ocean-going vessels which, in the last 2 years prior to arrival at an Argentinian port, have called port(s) in the Risk areas where the FSMC and the Japanese species of *Lymantria Dispar* (JGM) are present prior to arrival at an Argentinian port. Vessels in this category must:

1. Arrive with a Certificate of Vessel Free of FSMC or JGM issued by the phytosanitary authority of the last port of departure or presence; and
2. Notify SENASA 72 hours prior to arrival to any Argentinian port, whether exempted or not from the Certificate of Vessel Free of FSMC or JGM.

Any vessel that cannot produce this certificate will be inspected. In addition, SENASA may conduct additional inspections on vessels based on its own risk assessment.

Risk area:	Requirements apply where a vessel has visited:	Specified risk period:
Russian Far East	Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, Vanino, Nevelsk, Kholmsk, Korsakov, Kozmino, Slavyanka, Posiet; Zarubino, Vostochny, Nakhodka, Vladivostok	15 June – 15 October
China	All ports	1 June – 30 September
Republic of Korea	Busan, Jinhae, Masan, Tongyeong, Jangseongpo, Okpo, Gohyeon, Incheon, Pyeongtaek-Dangjin, Daesan, Taean, Donghae-Mukho, Okgye, Hosan, Ulsan, Pohang, Gwangyang, Hadong, Samcheonpo, Yeosu, Gunsan, Mokpo, Boryeong	1 June – 30 September
Northern Japan	In prefectures of Aomori, Fukushima, Hokkaido, Iwate, Miyagi	15 June – 15 October
Western Japan	In prefectures of Akita, Yamagata, Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa	1 June – 30 September
Eastern Japan	In prefectures of Fukui, Ibaraki, Chiba, Tokyo, Kanagawa, Shizuoka, Aichi, Mie	1 June – 30 September
Southern Japan	In prefectures of Ehime, Fukuoka, Hiroshima, Hyogo, Kagawa, Kagoshima, Kochi, Kumamoto, Kyoto, Miyazaki, Nagasaki, Oita, Okayama, Osaka, Saga, Shimane, Tokushima, Tottori, Wakayama, Yamaguchi	15 May – 31 August
Far Southern Japan	In prefecture of Okinawa	25 May – 30 June

Charter party clauses

Where the specific trade requires this, the charter party can contain a dedicated FSMC clause with specific requirements. For example, BIMCO issued a standardised Flighted Spongy Moth Complex Clause for Time Charter Parties 2023, focusing on the basic obligations and

responsibilities of owners and charterers. In view of the strict regulatory and inspection landscape, parties are advised to always insert specific clauses in their charter party in case the chartered vessel may be subject to regulation related to the FSMC.

“The implications of the delays caused by FSMC can be very serious”

Conclusion

Owners and charterers have to be very careful when their vessel calls at a port in a risk area, as proof will be required to confirm that the vessel is FSMC free. If this is not obtained, this can lead to delays, laytime and loss of time disputes, fines, etc. Time charterers, therefore, have to be very vigilant in dealing with FSMC after having called at an FSMC risk area.

As the implications of the delays caused by FSMC and FSMC-related issues can be very serious, certificates must be obtained on time and regular self-inspections must be performed. In summary, we recommend the following actions to be taken by the crew:

- ◆ Carry out a thorough visual inspection of all accessible areas of the vessel's superstructure, decks, holds, cargo and cargo gear.
- ◆ Egg masses can be scraped off and should be destroyed (in alcohol, boiling water or by incineration). Painting over egg masses or dropping them into the water is not sufficient as this will not kill the eggs or larvae.
- ◆ Record all details of the inspections and the removal and disposal of FSMC egg masses (if any) in the vessel's logbook.

We, furthermore, recommend using clear clauses outlining the allocation of responsibilities in respect to the risk of infestation by FSMC.



Ilian Djadjev
Contractual Loss Prevention Consultant

+31 10 799 5800
Ilian.Djadjev@msigspecialtymarine.com

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