DRAFT RULES

MoEFCC publishes the draft Tar-balls Management Rules, 2026

Draft G.S.R. 252(E) of April 3, 2026 sets out the Tar-balls Management Rules, 2026: who collects, stores, transports and disposes of tar-balls, and on what terms.

G.S.R. 252(E), A DRAFT notification of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change dated April 3, 2026, sets out the draft Tar-balls Management Rules, 2026, under sections 3, 6 and 25 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The draft defines tar-balls as a weathered product of oil spills from sources including offshore oil exploration, tanker, ship and vessel accidents, oil-well blowouts, pipeline leakages, release of bilge and natural oil seepage. The rules would come into force after one year from the date of publication of the final notification.

THE CHANGE

Draft rules for the management of tar-balls: prevention of oil spills, collection along shorelines, treatment, storage and disposal, authorization by State Pollution Control Boards, a manifest system, environmental compensation and a Steering Committee.

KEY FACTS

TYPE
Draft rules

G.S.R. NUMBER
G.S.R. 252(E)

DATED
April 3, 2026

APPLIES FROM
Proposed: after one year from the date of publication of the final notification in the Official Gazette (rule 1(ii) of the draft)

REFERENCES

G.S.R. 252(E)

CG-DL-E-04042026-271565

MoEFCC publishes the draft Tar-balls Management Rules, 2026

G.S.R. 252(E) · April 3, 2026

G.S.R. 252(E), a draft notification of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change dated April 3, 2026, sets out the draft Tar-balls Management Rules, 2026, under sections 3, 6 and 25 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The draft defines tar-balls as a weathered product of oil spills from sources including offshore oil exploration, tanker, ship and vessel accidents, oil-well blowouts, pipeline leakages, release of bilge and natural oil seepage. The rules would come into force after one year from the date of publication of the final notification.

The notice says the draft will be taken into consideration on or after the expiry of a period of sixty days from the date on which copies of the Gazette containing this notification are made available to the public, and invites objections or suggestions in writing within that period, by post to the Secretary of the Ministry or by email to the two addresses printed in the notice. Counted from the Gazette's issue date (April 3, 2026), the period ended on June 2, 2026; counted from the day it was put online (April 4, 2026), on June 3, 2026. These closing dates are worked out, not printed.

Oil facility owners take preventive measures under the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025, the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948 and the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan of the Indian Coast Guard. State Governments ensure collection of tar-balls and cleaning of the shoreline, and would declare pollution due to tar balls in the coastal area a State disaster; District Administrations collect, handle and transport tar balls deposited along the district shoreline, keep a local response team, obtain authorization from the State Pollution Control Board and report quarterly. The Indian Coast Guard, the pollution control boards, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and the National Remote Sensing Agency have duties of their own.

Collected tar-balls go to an authorized person for disposal, which may include waste to energy, co-incineration in a cement plant or common incineration in a Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility. Occupiers apply for authorization in Form 1 within sixty days from the date of publication of the rules; the State Pollution Control Board grants it in Form 2 within one hundred and twenty days, valid for five years. Transport uses a seven-copy manifest in Form 7, and transport to another State for final disposal needs a No Objection Certificate from the State Pollution Control Boards of both States.

An oil facility owner whose oil spill causes loss, damage or injury, including formation of tar balls, is liable for environmental compensation which may be equal to that loss and the District Administration's expenditure on tar-balls; the State Pollution Control Board or Pollution Control Committee imposes it and keeps it in a separate account. A Steering Committee of central ministries advises the coastal States and Union Territories, and appeals go to the State or Union Territory Environment Secretary within thirty days. The draft (F. No. HSM-11/22/2022-HSM)

appears in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (i), No. 232, dated April 3, 2026.

G.S.R. number	G.S.R. 252(E)
Dated	April 3, 2026
Put online	April 4, 2026
Gazette ID	CG-DL-E-04042026-271565
Rule	Other waste rules
Type	Draft rules
Products	Tar-balls
What it does	Draft rules for the management of tar-balls: prevention of oil spills, collection along shorelines, treatment, storage and disposal, authorization by State Pollution Control Boards, a manifest system, environmental compensation and a Steering Committee.
Applies from	Proposed: after one year from the date of publication of the final notification in the Official Gazette (rule 1(ii) of the draft)
Comments	• Closing date June 1, 2026, as MoEFCC states. MoEFCC's What's New lists it for comment from April 3, 2026 • Closing date June 2 or 3, 2026, worked out: 60 days from the Gazette of April 3, 2026, put online April 4, 2026
Conditions	• Objections or suggestions in writing within the period of sixty days from the date on which copies of the Gazette containing this notification are made available to the public (the notice's words), to the Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jor Bagh Road, New Delhi – 110 003, or by email to the addresses printed in the notice. • Closing date, worked out (not printed): June 2, 2026, counted from the issue date, April 3, 2026; June 3, 2026, counted from the publish date, April 4, 2026.
Applies to	All persons who generate, collect, receive, store, transport, treat, dispose or handle tar-balls, including oil extraction and exploration facilities, ships, oil tankers and oil facility owners; coastal State Governments, District Administrations and the central agencies named in rules 5 to 10.
Issued under	Sections 3, 6 and 25 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986); published as required under sub-rule (3) of rule 5 of the

Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986

Signed by NEELESH KUMAR SAH, Jt. Secy.

The notification, entry by entry

Entry	Text
Rule 1: Short title and commencement	Tar-balls Management Rules, 2026; in force after one year from the date of publication of the final notification in the Official Gazette.
Rule 2: Application	All persons who generate, collect, receive, store, transport, treat, dispose or handle tar-balls in any manner, including oil extraction and exploration facilities, ships, oil tankers, oil facility owners and authorized persons.
Rule 3: Definition	Sixteen definitions, a) to p), including "Tar-balls" (a weathered product of oil spills due to offshore oil exploration activities, oil tanker, ship or vessel accidents, oil-well blowouts, pipeline leakages, release of bilge, industrial effluent from ships and tankers and natural oil seepage) and "Co-processing" (use of tar-balls with calorific value exceeding 1500 kcal as raw material or a source of energy).
Rule 4: Management of tar-balls (preventive measure)	Oil facility owners take the preventive measures under the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025, the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948 and the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOSDCP) of the Indian Coast Guard, or as prescribed by the Central Pollution Control Board.
Rule 5: Responsibilities of State Governments and District Administration	State Level Crisis Management Groups set up a reporting system for sightings by the public; State Governments ensure collection and shoreline cleaning, transport to a Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility and training, and declare pollution due to tar balls in the coastal area a State disaster; District Administrations collect, handle and transport tar balls along the district shoreline.
Rule 6: Responsibilities of Ministry of Defence (Indian Coast Guard)	Implements the NOS-DCP, undertakes aerial and surface surveillance in the Indian EEZ and gives quarterly oil leakage or spill reports beyond territorial water to coastal States and pollution control boards.
Rule 7: Responsibilities of the Central Pollution Control Board, State Pollution Control Boards and Pollution Control Committees	Technical assistance; a database of tar-ball incidents; lists of authorized disposal facilities; model Standard Operating Procedures; an online system within one year; guidelines for use of the environmental compensation under rule 21.
Rules 8 to 10: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways; Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas; National Remote Sensing Agency	Clean-up at ports and port-owned shorelines; quarterly spill reports from every offshore installation (up to 500 meters) and preventive steps; surveillance and detection of oil spills and tar-ball hot-spots.

Rule 11: Responsibilities of the occupier and operator of Tar-balls	Handle tar-balls without adverse effect on human health and the environment; send collected tar-balls to an authorized person; disposal may include waste to energy, co-incineration in a cement plant or common incineration in a Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility.
Rule 12: Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility for Tar-balls	Sites identified by the State Government, occupiers or operators; designed to technical guidelines of the Central Pollution Control Board with State Pollution Control Board approval; inspected quarterly; records in Form 3 and an annual return in Form 4 by June 30; existing hazardous waste facilities may also be used.
Rule 13: Collection	The District Administration keeps a local response team, provides training and protective equipment, keeps a logbook, obtains authorization from the State Pollution Control Board, hands collected tar balls to an authorized person and reports quarterly.
Rules 14 and 15: Packaging and Labelling; Transportation of Tar-balls	Labels as per Form 5; a Transport Emergency card in Form 6; a No Objection Certificate from the State Pollution Control Boards of both States for disposal in another State; prior intimation to transit States.
Rule 16: Manifest system (Movement Document) for Tar-balls to be used within the country only	Seven color-coded copies of the manifest in Form 7, all signed by the sender: the sender keeps one and sends one to the State Pollution Control Board; the transporter carries the other five to the receiver, who keeps one and sends the rest to the transporter, its State Pollution Control Board, the sender and, where the sender is in another State, the sender's State Pollution Control Board.
Rule 17: Grant of authorisation for managing tar ball	Every occupier handling tar balls applies in Form 1 and obtains authorization from the State Pollution Control Board within sixty days from the date of publication of the rules; the Board grants it in Form 2 within one hundred and twenty days, valid for five years; records in Form 3 and an annual return in Form 4 by June 30; no one handles tar balls without valid authorization.
Rules 18 to 20: Power to suspend or cancel an authorisation; Utilisation of Tar Balls; Authorization for pre-processing and/or co-processing	The State Pollution Control Board may suspend or cancel an authorization; utilization needs authorization on the basis of the Central Pollution Control Board's procedures or trial runs; no trial run is required for co-processing in cement plants where guidelines exist, and such co-processing does not warrant Environment Clearance under S.O. 3518(E) of November 23, 2016.
Rule 21: Environment Compensation	An oil facility owner whose oil spill causes loss, damage or injury, including formation of tar balls, pays compensation which may be equal to such loss and the District Administration's expenditure on tar-balls; occupiers, transporters, co-processors and operators may also be charged; imposed by the State Pollution Control Board or Pollution Control Committee and kept in a separate account.

Rules 22 to 28: Steering Committee, records and returns, accident reporting, contravention, difficulties, audit, appeal	A Steering Committee of central ministries advises coastal States and Union Territories; annual inventory to the Central Pollution Control Board by September 30 and its review report by December 30; accidents reported in Form 8; audits, including of the environmental compensation account by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India; appeals in Form 9 within thirty days to the State or Union Territory Environment Secretary, disposed of within sixty days.
Forms 1 to 9	Application for authorization; grant of authorization; records; annual returns; labeling of containers; Transport Emergency (TREM) card; manifest; accident report; appeal.

The notification (PDF, 1.4 MB)

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